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Repression and Rebellions in Southern Mexico: The Search for a Political Economy of Dignity

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Preface

The Mexican southwest is known not only for having the greatest ecological diversity in the country, but also for its great cultural diversity. This region constitutes the undeniable indigenous face of Mexico, containing 74% of the entire country's indigenous population. The Sierra Juárez, a range of tall, mountainous peaks tucked away to the north of the city of Oaxaca, is home to the Zapotecs, the "people of the clouds". The Zapotecs have the single largest indigenous presence in the state of Oaxaca, but they are one of many indigenous peoples. For example the Mixe, according to their oral history, were the only indigenous people never conquered by the bearded Spaniard colonizers, since the area where they lived could not be found by explorers.

My first conscious awareness of my Zapotec origin was that of living in the city of Oaxaca, speaking Spanish and listening to my parents and extended family speaking Zapotec and practicing Zapotec customs. Due to the rampant practice of discrimination against indigenous people and in a desire to protect his children and ensure their success in coping with the non-indigenous environment, my father prohibited the use of our native language. One of the many consequences was an ongoing rupture in inter-generational communication and transference of our cultural heritage due to the language barrier.

During junior high school I had my first encounter with the social reality of my environment when my classmate Alejandro shared with me that he, like students and workers in other regions, was seriously considering joining a group of clandestine armed guerrillas in order to create the conditions for the construction of a more just and egalitarian society. According to Alejandro, education was insufficient to bring about true change, and a clandestine armed struggle was necessary. The slogans and writings that armed revolutionary groups wrote on walls throughout Oaxaca took on a new a deeper meaning for me.

My awareness and resulting interest in the generalized environment of threatened violence increased during my high school studies. I arrived at my campus one day only to find it surrounded by federal troops bearing high-powered arms and opening fire on the school with students and professors holed up inside. The reason for the military attack was that students, angry at the authoritarian attitude of the private bus companies and decrying the imposition of higher fares as unjust and arbitrary for the public at large, had taken over some privately-owned city buses as part of their demand that public fares be lowered. It was during that same year of high school that I also had my first contact with the fields of political science and economics. That experience helped begin my articulation of the environment of discrimination, social tension, and the contrasts between extreme poverty and wealth, and between indigenous and non-indigenous. A few years later I moved to Puebla, the state to the north of Oaxaca, and lived with my friend Miguel, a Oaxacan immigrant laborer. Miguel was a night-shift employee of the U.S. transnational company, Stanley. Though his one-bedroom house did not even have a living room, he opened the doors for me to stay in his home where he lived with his whole family. Because of this help I was able to begin my university studies in economics. Conversations with Miguel about his clandestine fight in the labor union to improve the unjust working conditions and salary spurred me on in my studies. The following year when I moved to Mexico City to continue my university studies, Lindy and Dinorah, a couple from the U. S. and Brazil respectively, offered me hospitality and housing without cost. They lived in one of the poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods in Mexico City. I am indebted to them for their hospitality and support. It was through them that I met my wife, Ramona Ryan, to whom I am indebted for the interminable quantity of hours of review and editing of this doctoral thesis.

The hospitality and information provided by NGOs who gave us access to their publications and selections from their libraries in Mexico City and Oaxaca, (MADERAS A.C., UCIZONI-Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona Norte, TRANSPARENCIA A.C., Alianza Cívica Nacional A.C.) were essential in helping to lay the foundation for this research. The assistance of Marina Pagés and Hieke of the Internacional Service for Peace (SIPAZ) in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas was invaluable. The same is true of visits to the Centro de Investigación Económica (CIEPAC A.C.), Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, and DESMI A.C., an organization that works with different communities, constructing an economy in harmony with the felt needs of these communities. These organizations are all located in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas.

In Oaxaca the help of Alicia Barabas of INAH (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia) was very helpful, as was the help of Jorge LoFredo, a specialist in guerrilla warfare in the region. The encouragement and friendship of Tom Offit and Howard Campbell kept me going when I was feeling discouraged. Also the suggestions of the director of CIESAS were very helpful. The staff and the library holdings of the Instituto Welte greatly facilitated this research.

I am especially indebted to my promoters Professors Bas de Gaay Fortman and Bob Goudzwaard, and the other members of my examination committee: Professors Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, Marteen Jansen, Oscar Salemink and Dr. Wil Pansters. Special thanks are due to Wil who went all the way to Oaxaca in the summer of 2005 and spent an entire day with me discussing comments and corrections to the manuscript. The delicious food, hospitality and special attention that Bas and Ina provided me during my two stays in the Netherlands for intensive committee work on this dissertation was both extremely generous and deeply appreciated. Many, many thanks are due to Bob and Rini for their hospitality, affirmation, and especially to Bob who has been my supporter and encourager from the beginning. Together Bas and

Bob have provided me with the guidance needed throughout this work.

The Free University of Amsterdam kindly covered the cost of my airline ticket to and from the Netherlands during the summer of 2005, and also the cost of the publication of this work, for which I am deeply appreciative. Baylor University facilitated my research through its excellent library staff and facilities. Finally, I thank my extended family for their support, and Hope Fellowship, a small Anabaptist community in Waco, for their support and encouragement.

Chapter I

Introduction

On January 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the U.S. and Canada entered into force. One hour later a group of armed indigenous men and women took over towns in Chiapas, the poorest state in Mexico. They called themselves Zapatistas, taking their name from Emiliano Zapata, a revolutionary peasant leader from southern Mexico.[1] In 1994 approximately one thousand people identified themselves as part of the EZLN, the Zapatista Army for National Liberation. They seized five cities: San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas and Altamirano.

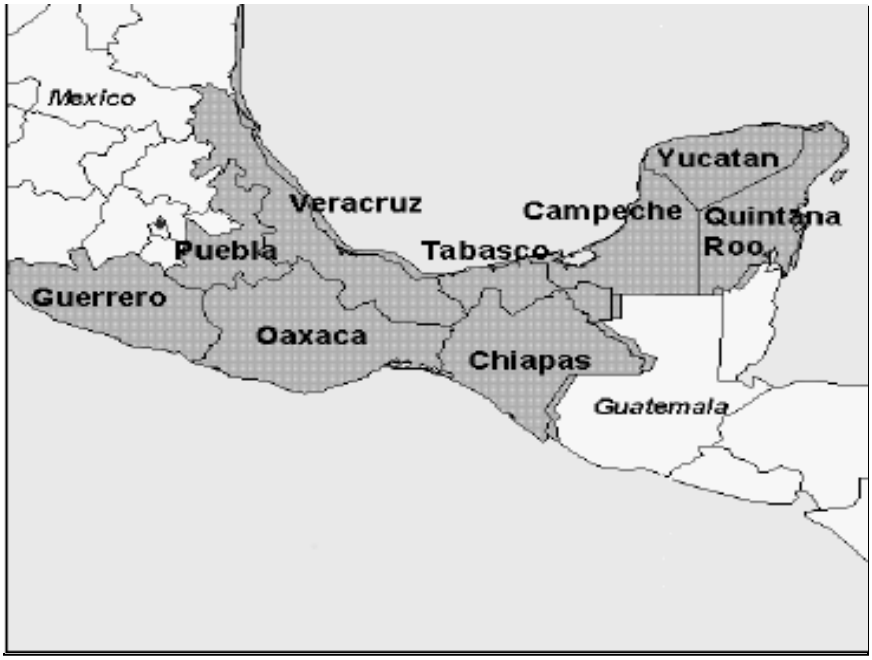
The Zapatistas declared that the NAFTA agreement represented a final death sentence for themselves and their communities and was a national and international official declaration of *exclusion*--exclusion from competitive markets due to their lack of means to compete with Mexican or U.S. corporations. It also implied the continuation of exclusion from participating in the national economic plan and exclusion from being a contributing part of society and government.

The Zapatista uprising in 1994 began what has become a peaceful civil movement nationwide whose presence has inspired other movements and changed the political map of contemporary Mexico through two important initiatives. First is the emergence of totally autonomous governing bodies in indigenous communities in Chiapas--*juntas de buen gobierno* (councils of good government), and second, the launching of "la otra campaña" (the other campaign) calling for the organization and mobilization of civil

[1] Zapata fought for agrarian reform on behalf of peasants. He demanded that expropriated land be returned to communities, and that one third of hacienda landholdings be distributed among landless peasants. His assassination was ordered by President Venustiano Carranza in 1919.

society to bring about significant changes from below. *La otra campaña* began simultaneous to the campaigns of the various political parties and the presidential rallies leading up to the presidential election of July 2006. With the tremendous impact of "zapatismo" (with its origin as an armed organization and later developing into a peaceful civil movement) on other armed groups, on civil society and on the image of government, it is probable that these two initiatives from southern Mexico are key to understanding contemporary Mexico.

Map 1 Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas and the Southeast Region of Mexico



Poverty, resistance movements, repression, and environmental deterioration have been persistent in southern Mexico. Both historically and in recent years the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero have appeared in the national census as the poorest states of Mexico. Furthermore, the number of armed groups has dramatically increased in the region in the last 30 years. Revolutionary groups have demanded radical social, political and

economic changes, yet positive changes have not taken place and neither the desires of the government nor those of revolutionary or peaceful civic movements have been fully realized.

The most recent appearance of new armed groups occurred August 31, 2006 in Oaxaca (capital city of the state of the same name) only hours before the annual presidential address to the nation on September 1 by President Vicente Fox. On a highway on the outskirts of the city masked men wearing fatigues and carrying automatic weapons distributed pamphlets of their "Manifiesto a la Nación Número 2" (Manifesto to the Nation Number 2), signed by six different organizations.[2] The manifesto warned the federal police and the military to not intervene in the three-month long teacher's strike which has now grown into a civil movement.[3]

This study attempts to identify deeply-rooted causes for the resistance of civil fronts seeking social justice and whose actions from the beginning are condemned and labeled variously as an isolated "abrupt violent uprising" (as in the case of Chiapas), or as being carried out by "radical groups", "urban guerrillas", and "violators of the law" (as in the cases of Guerrero and Oaxaca). The relevance of this point can be seen in this process of what we here call "enemyzation", (the labeling of the "other" as an enemy of society), as this is often followed by military repression and an increase in the violations of human rights.

The revolutionary movement in Chiapas, which constitutes the core of the present study on southern Mexico, has been assumed by many to result from conditions of poverty in terms of

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[2] Of these six organizations, two are known: Movimiento Revolucionario Lucio Cabañas--MRLCB, (Lucio Cabañas Revolutionary Movement), and Tendencia Democrática Revolucionaria-Ejército del Pueblo--TDR-EP (Democratic Revolutionary Tendency-Army of the People). The other four organizations—El Colectivo Revolucionario-Francisco Javier Mina (Francisco Javier Mina Revolutionary Collective), Organización Insurgente 1o de Mayo (May First Insurgent Organization), Brigada de Ajusticiamiento 2 de Diciembre (December Second Justice-Making Brigade) and Brigadas Populares de Liberación—BPL, (People's Liberation Brigades), are previously unknown.

[3] The pamphlet stated that "the revolutionary armed organizations are in a state of alert to respond strongly in case the national security forces intervene in the conflict. As this introduction is being finalized (September 2006) the city of Oaxaca, as well as the state, has become nearly paralyzed. Further discussion of this conflict appears in Chapter V.

low levels of income and/or the presence of active "radical groups". In fact in Latin America in general, guerrilla activity has been commonly associated with conditions of poverty and the existence of radical groups. In order to end armed movements, consequently, it has been believed that poverty must first be mitigated. Unfortunately the main official response has been one of military repression combined with assistance programs and other government initiatives. Some official reports have suggested that guerrilla movements are the product of the presence of radical insurgent individuals acting upon Marxist ideology.[4]

These arguments show initial assumptions in three areas. First is the assumption that without a doubt, the conditions of poverty are primarily linked to rebellions, although the nature of the link is not clear. The second assumption is that guerrilla activity is on the rise and that the emergence of new armed organizations is mainly due to the misery in which people live and their resulting radical decision to take up arms in order to make their presence known. Third, it is assumed that guerrilla movements recruit peasant and indigenous support in order to succeed, often implying that Indians and peasants are incapable of massive, powerful organization on their own. It has been well known throughout the continent that guerrilla war has depended on gaining support from peasants and indigenous groups for its success.[5]

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[4] Throughout Latin America a thread of commonality regarding the existence and increase in guerrilla activity manifests itself in the great amount of articles, reports and media attention dealing with *instability* and national security in the so-called "backyard" of the U.S. The conditions and reasons for the existence of revolutionary movements, on the other hand, have not been assigned the same importance. The Cuban revolution, for example, has been criticized by the mainstream media for having deficiencies in its results, while neglecting the reasons which led up to the revolution.

[5] In fact, the failure of various guerrilla movements in Latin America has been attributed to the inability of the guerrillas to create a strong link with broad segments of society, in order to then be able to mobilize From this perspective, them and develop a military structure. Revolutionaries in Latin America, inspired by the Cuban revolution, followed the "foco" theory proposed by Ernesto "Che" Guevara in 1960, which argued that guerrilla fighters can defeat a national army if the guerrilla activity becomes established with a focal point in the countryside and there creates the conditions to launch its military campaign. Many armed movements have faced failure when following the Cuban model, as they have sought to repeat the Cuban experience but launched their guerrilla attacks without having gained serious mobilization of the population. Examples commonly given of this are: Paraguay (14 of May 1959), Colombia (MOEC 1965), Ecuador (Revolutionary Union, 1962), The Dominican Republic (1963), Argentina (1963, 1964), Peru

In the specific case of Mexico, the first assumption is drawn from the evident extreme levels of poverty that can be found in any statistics on the economy. The second assumption is based on the existence, according to experts, of at least twelve and as many as thirty armed groups of rebellion in Mexico.[6] The third assumption (a misconception) regarding the incapability of indigenous peoples can be attributed to the fact that, unfortunately, indigenous and peasant populations tend to appear in the analysis of revolutionary or resistance movements as a dependent variable. Therefore, in accordance with this view, the participation of these populations in social change has been limited to offering support to revolutionary fighters. Carlos Montemayor, a Mexican writer, however, views the EZLN and the uprising as part of *a thirty-year process of continuous armed struggle* by different groups in the poorest area of Mexico. According to his analysis, as long as the circumstances that gave rise to the rebellion persist, the current conflict will persist and new ones will appear. This study pursues this alternative perspective, searching to respond to the following basic unanswered questions. Is there indeed a direct correlation between poverty and revolts in Mexico? If extreme poverty is the main cause of indigenous people joining armed rebellions in the region as is often assumed, how can we address the issue? If poverty limits what people can do and achieve, how is it possible to overcome poverty and its effects on people's lives?

Regarding the indigenous movement in Mexico, it is important to take into account the central role of the *resistance* of indigenous peoples within the indigenous agenda and discourse. This is a resistance namely to a process of assimilation, marginalization and exclusion. This leads us to ask if the reduction of constraints in the lives of those who are submerged in poverty can free up resources and creativity, allowing the indigenous

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(1965), and others. See Gerard Chaliand, *Revolutions in the Third World*.(New York: The Viking Press 1977)

[6] See Jorge Lofredo,"La guerrilla mexicana: de la unidad a la ruptura" *Memoria: Revista mensual de política y cultura*, February 2004, 180.

struggle to move beyond resistance and survival, toward the building up of empowered economic and political arrangements. In this same vein, we also ask in what way could economic agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) be perceived as a major obstacle and threat to the survival of thousands of people.

In approaching this complex reality we propose that the analysis be initiated by identifying a common thread which may link the above questions and other concerns. For the sake of clarity and exposition we have chosen a central leading question which we believe captures our main concerns and can guide our analysis. Our leading analytical question is the following: *What have been the main socio-economic and political conditions for the rise of past and more recent rebellions in Chiapas, and to what extent have these rebellions been driven by the search for the protection of collective interests and freedom?* It is this analytical question, which needs to be answered before we can even consider questions of a more normative nature, namely the crucial question: *Under which conditions could more positive outcomes (rather than violent uprisings) be feasible?*

With this leading analytical question in mind, this paper as a first step attempts to study the region's current socio-economic and political complexity. An analysis of the context of poverty, therefore, becomes inevitable. Additionally, the reasons behind armed movements and their assumed association with poverty and exclusion will also be studied. It is necessary to consider in depth the context surrounding our central question. To enable us to clarify the complex socio-economic and political context of southern Mexico we seek to answer the following sub-questions, which reflect the dual-nature of our leading question:

1. What is the situation regarding poverty in the region? Is extreme poverty the main reason for the incidence of armed groups in Mexico? Why might people opt for violence?
2. What are the roots of the Zapatista rebellion? Or, more explicitly, what are the specific and dynamic economic or

political factors which lie behind the Zapatista rebellion in southern Mexico?

3. Do there exist socio-economic and political elements which could lead to or at least have an influence on a different, more positive outcome in the midst of latent conflicts?

For the purpose of answering these sub-questions, we set forth the following chapter order and content:

Since the Chiapas uprising occurred in a region with extreme conditions of poverty, Chapter II explores the first and most common assumption about revolts--the connection between poverty and rebellion. This section presents a general overview of poverty in Mexico, with both earlier and more recent reports on poverty. It includes various explanations for the existence of acts of collective violence, exploring socio-economic and political conditions and issues related to ethnicity. Previous studies and theories are presented as complementary studies with their own merits, providing relevant or irrelevant contributions to our search.

After searching for the reasons for revolutions and noting the dimensions of poverty, Chapter III moves further, exploring the possible roots of revolutionary movements in Chiapas. Past rebellions are briefly presented and the more recent 1994 Zapatista uprising is discussed. This chapter entails an analysis of the Zapatista rebellion and its actors in Chiapas. Four main movements operating in Chiapas prior to the uprising are also selected for analysis in connection to the rebellion: the human rights movement, the indigenous movement, the liberation theology movement and the emergence of the Zapatista army. These four movements are selected for their relevant presence in the region of the conflict and for sharing the common viewpoint that *development* or *improvement* (implicitly or explicitly) is a dynamic process of *struggle,* brought about by individuals and communities. This chapter also points to the evidence of an existing *latent conflict* rooted in economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of Mexican society.

Chapter IV presents Amartya Sen's contribution on entitlement and capabilities and applies it to an understanding of rebellion in the region of southern Mexico. The chapter searches for dynamic socio-economic and political factors behind the uprising which perpetuate the current circumstances of marginalization. This chapter also makes a set of general statements on four communities in the region and shows evidence of an existing economy that strives both to remain true to the cultural context and to be quite effective in fulfilling the need for subsistence.

Chapter V, though based on the empirical, analytical findings of the previous chapters, takes on a more normative nature. It represents an effort to articulate the vital elements (both found and absent) in the social and political circumstances in the region, and to place them within a possible economic scenario which could, in the long run, function to ease tensions in the region. This type of economic scenario is introduced not as a prescriptive option but as a descriptive and analytical argument of the already existing elements within the socio-economic, political, and cultural context of the region. Thus, these elements have been suggested by the civil movements in the region and in consequence need to be included, in our view, in any alternative for the region. In this line of thought, the argument contained in our possible scenario is centered on the fundamental need for the protection of human dignity, which is a central concept in the various discourses of civil movements in the region. The proposed *Living Economy Scenario* is a possible way of articulating, within one perspective, the principles and elements which are found or practiced to an extent in the region. The alternative scenario also attempts to incorporate socio-economic and political priorities formulated and voiced by social movements, including concerned professionals. This scenario is suggested by the evidence of an *inner economy* which seeks the expansion of local markets, preservation of social relationships, self-reliance, cooperation, and sustainable

livelihoods. It discusses the issue of exclusion, failure of entitlements, and development as a *process of empowerment*.

Finally, Chapter VI recollects the main findings throughout this work, highlighting potential recurring scenarios of vicious cycles of violence. It offers three final premises and indicates the location of the proposed Living Economy Scenario in relation to the main themes discussed in this research.

Data Collection and the Guiding Methodology

This work began to take shape with the opportunity I had in 2000 to participate as a member of an international team of pre-election observers organized by Global Exchange. This experience provided me with the opportunity of interviewing individuals, politicians, party members, teachers, journalists, civil organizations and community leaders in Mexico City and the state of Oaxaca. On July 2, 2000 the PRI, the official political party which had been in power for 70 years, lost the presidential election.

This research has been conducted through a series of visits to the region as well as research in the U.S. and Holland. Field visits in Chiapas and Oaxaca were ongoing from 2000-2006, as well as the gathering of published and unpublished articles, statements, and books. During my time in Mexico I did research in the libraries of the Colegio de Mexico, Universidad Nacional de México (UNAM), and Universidad Metropolitana (UAM), among others. In Oaxaca the libraries of the Instituto Tecnológico de Oaxaca and the Welte Institute (a library specializing in studies and research pertaining to Oaxaca and the southwest region) provided me with extensive research materials. In the summer of 2003 I also had the opportunity of visiting and interviewing individuals as well as key actors of many non-governmental organizations; for example, SIPAZ (which offers a permanent presence of peace observers in Chiapas), DESMI A.C. (an organization dedicated to finding economic alternatives for 240 impoverished communities in 17 municipalities in Chiapas,

CIEPAC (an organization that carries out economic research and community action in Chiapas), and the Center for Human Rights Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, A.C. (a faith-based organization founded in 1989 by Bishop Samuel Ruiz).[7] During the summer of 2006 information was gathered through personal observations of social mobilization--demonstrations, marches, and sit-ins. Radio interviews and reports provided news of the peaceful takeovers of radio and television stations by women's organizations, teacher's labor unions and various civil groups. Interviews were conducted with striking public school teachers in Oaxaca and representatives of APPO (a coalition of over 300 civil organizations), as well as interviews with researchers in the field, such as with the directors of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and of CIESAS (the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology). Nevertheless, information on armed groups has been only partially documented. In official data information on armed groups is non-existent. Jorge Lofredo, a journalist and writer in Oaxaca who has reported on and interviewed leaders of armed groups, became a great help in overcoming this difficulty. Similar difficulties were also found in locating documented reports regarding economics and rebellions in the region. Traditionally these two fields have been viewed as separate issues.

The leading methodology here is Amartya Sen's entitlement approach. This Nobel laureate's entitlement/capability approach was used in India and elsewhere for the analysis of poverty and famine, and has contributed to the debate and understanding of the meaning of economic development. In his work *Development as Freedom*, Sen explains that although freedom can be seen as the *goal* of development, freedom can also be considered a *means* of development, through the expansion of people's basic functioning capability in order to reach their aspirations. Freedom is not used

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[7] In 1994 Samuel Ruiz became the mediator between the government and the Zapatistas. The Dialogue for Peace occurred from February 21 to March 2 in 1994 at the San Cristóbal Cathedral, with Ruiz as mediator between the EZLN and the Commissioner for Peace (Manuel Camacho).

here to make reference to an effective juridical system to protect liberties and property from other agents, including the state (HIR 2002). Rather, freedom is defined within the context of development. According to Sen, development is a process of expanding the freedoms that people value. The expansion of freedoms can be seen as both a "primary end" and a "principal means". Sen defines the first case as the "constitutive role" of freedom and the second, as "the instrumental role" of freedom. The constitutive role of freedom refers to the process of the expansion of human freedoms and includes basic capabilities to avoid starvation and premature death. The instrumental role, however, "concerns the way different kinds of rights, opportunities, and entitlements contribute to the expansion of human freedom in general, and thus to promoting development" (1999:37). Sen considers the following to be instrumental freedoms: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These freedoms supplement and strengthen one another, contributing to the capabilities of an individual. This work is guided by this insight, although we are aware that our findings may not lead exactly to the "building capabilities" target or the formation of "capable" individuals as the only valid objective.

This work researched documented records on rebellions and more specifically on the Zapatista uprising in 1994, searching for the root of armed rebellions within the framework of Sen's concept of freedom-centered perspective. Therefore, in general terms this research is subscribed within the field of development, placing the issue of freedom at the center. To place people and freedom intentionally in center stage and apply Sen's methodology inevitably involves the inclusion of an interdisciplinary approach of actors in order to articulate a perspective centered on capabilities, entitlements, deprivations, freedoms and constraints.

The leaders of armed uprisings in Chiapas as well as in other states in Mexico have claimed to fight for more humane, freer lives and for a more dignifying life for the people. Their struggle claims

to be for the ending of poverty and the consequential building of the assets of the poor. We can ask, therefore, if the revolutionary option has survived in Mexico and also in Latin America because of its promising discourse for the achievement of freedom as defined by Sen. This paper argues that Sen's contributions can be effective in clarifying these issues and reaching a broader understanding of the Chiapas uprising. They can also provide an alternative argument for the occurrence and persistence of uprisings.

Remarks on Terminology

Sen's entitlement approach will help clarify issues of poverty and rebellion. By way of definition, *entitlements* are the commodities over which an individual can establish ownership and command, which enable her to acquire food (Sen 1999). Entitlements are dependent on three factors: direct ownership over resources, conditions of production to obtain better wages and market exchange conditions. *Entitlement failure* occurs then when any one of those factors fails to provide access to food for entitlement holders. Since the concept of entitlement failure is not a conclusive concept and its content is not rigidly defined by Sen, the use of this concept in our analysis will include the failure of access to satisfiers to fulfill fundamental human needs. These fundamental needs include freedom as well as the need for protection, subsistence, affection, understanding, participation and leisure.[8]

When an entitlement analysis approach is taken, dealing with and defining a context becomes necessary. Since entitlements are the ground for claims and demands for the fulfillment of rights, the entitlement system cannot be analyzed in a vague context. De Gaay Fortman clarifies the legal, political and economic structures in which entitlements are legitimized. In Sen's analysis there is an

[8] Max-Neef, Manfred A. *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections*. (New York and London: The Apex Press, 1991)

assumption that the hungry poor are passive even when suffering starvation. Yet unfulfilled claims over entitlements can be a potential ground for conflict escalation, with conflict understood to be an interactive, dynamic process that emerges in a determined context; a social phenomenon of human creation which can be prevented, transformed and overcome depending on how it is approached. In analyzing conflict we are faced with the need for unavoidable excursions into various fields of study in the social sciences in order to understand its roots, the actors involved, the dynamics of the conflict, its interaction with socio-economic and political structures and the possibilities for its prevention and transformation. Inevitable conflicts may surface as rights and entitlements are actively pursued for implementation by a society in a closed power structure. Given the presence of growing conflicts in the analyzed region, the impact on as well as the responses from entitlement holders who are facing failure of entitlements is central to this paper. The failure of entitlements is ultimately manifested as a *failure of acquirement*, when individuals cannot carry out activities that dignify and sustain their livelihoods due to legal, political or economic constraints.

Entitlement systems are treated here as elements of a dynamic social process that obligates us to take socio-economic, political and cultural perspectives of analysis. Consequently, the *political economy* approach taken in this study considers not just the economic aspect of these processes but the relation to other actors and variables; such as the state, the power structure, the legal system, communities, civil society and *human rights* (basic entitlements).

Historically, the state has been the main guarantor of entitlements and rights. Nevertheless, the history of Mexico following the Spanish conquest has been one of frequent armed rebellions. Thus, in this text the term *rebellion* is used to make reference to the act of collectively-organized dissidents who begin by saying “No!” or “Enough is enough!” to the pre-established system of government which fails to render protection to people or

guarantee the fulfillment of their rightful claims. Furthermore, in the case of Chiapas, the term "rebellion", "uprising", "revolt" may appear as interchangeable terms, and those who resist submission and refuse to obey the legal framework of governance have commonly been defined as *rebels.* This study utilizes the term *rebels* since it has even been appropriated by the dissidents themselves. However, a major objective of this study is to clarify the identity of these so-called *rebels* as fellow human beings who seek to live in dignity and claim not to see any other option than the use of violence to make their voice heard.

The concept of "revolution" used in this work is that of the Zapatista movement, summarized in following by Holloway:

> The open-ended nature of the Zapatista movement is summed up in the idea that it is a revolution, not a Revolution (with small letters, to avoid polemics with the many vanguards and safeguards of THE REVOLUTION). It is a revolution, because the claim to dignity in a society built upon negation of dignity can only be met through a radical transformation of society. But it is not a Revolution in the sense of having some grand plan, in the sense of a movement designed to bring about the Great Event which will change the world. Its claim to be revolutionary lies not in the preparation for the future Event but in the present inversion of perspective, in the consistent insistence on seeing the world in terms of that which is incompatible with the world as it is: human dignity (1998: 168)

Consequently, the rebellion in Chiapas, which represents a central point of this paper, has distinguished itself by rejecting the idea of Revolution in its classical conception--that is the idea that a revolution has to have the state in the center of its objectives. Since the state contains political power, the destruction or reform of the state as part of a revolutionary move to socialism has been seen as an inevitable step in the theoretical construction of a true revolutionary process. Nevertheless, with the Zapatista movement, the connection between revolution and control of the state has collapsed (Holloway 1996). Instead, the rebels claim that their

struggle is not to take power for themselves but to dismantle the existing power structure. It will be seen later that by rejecting the use of people as a means to legitimize political goals, the rebels have adopted an immediate, central focus: namely, the construction of an inclusive society based on *dignity*. Consequently, at its end this study seriously considers the possibility that *human dignity* be the foundation of the construction of a possible socio-economic and political alternative for Chiapas and the region. It attempts to place on the discussion table the possibility of the practice of a *political economy of dignity*. What might the pre-requisites or necessary conditions be for a society to truly move toward an economy that uplifts the dignity of people?

Finally, in this work *ethic conflict* is defined according to Stavenhagen as a conflict where the contender actors identify themselves using ethnic criteria (Stavenhagen 1995/1991).

Personal Notes Regarding This Study

This study reflects three inter-related areas of my personal interest. The first area relates to my identity as a Zapotec from southern Mexico. The second area is tied to my growing up in an environment with the ever-present reminders of political slogans commonly painted on walls throughout the region, a constant military/police presence, the violent repression of university students and community activists, and a subtle state of fear and insecurity. My awareness was also shaped by my growing interest in understanding my environment, and subsequently by my commitment to peace and justice. The third area is my experience of growing up in extreme poverty and living with the personal consequences of child labor. Jointly these three areas have increased my desire to search for explanations of the links between violence, repression and economics. My identity, background and personal experiences do not hamper my ability to conduct research and report my findings from an observing-participatory fashion about what has become a matter of my heart.

Chapter II

Does Misery Instigate Armed Rebellions?

Today we say: we are here we are rebel dignity, the forgotten of the homeland.
The flower of the word will not die. The masked face which today has a name may die, but the word which came from the depth of history and the earth can no longer be cut by the arrogance of the powerful. We were born of the night. We live in the night. We will die in her. But the light will be tomorrow for others, for all those who today weep at the night, for those who have been denied the day, for those for whom death is a gift, for those who are denied life. The light will be for all of them. For everyone everything. For us pain and anguish, for us the joy of rebellion, for us a future denied, for us the dignity of insurrection. For us nothing. (Zapatista fourth declaration of the Lacandon Jungle)

Loud knocks at 4:00 AM brought the owner of the Bios Pharmacy to her front door. Upon opening it, she faced the barrel of a gun, as men and women entered her pharmacy and took control of the store. It was January 1st, 1994 in San Cristóbal de las Casas in the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico. The coletos[9] were caught by surprise and unable to recognize the hundreds of men and women taking over businesses, government buildings and the police station of San Cristóbal. In spite of the sudden appearance of hundreds of armed people taking control, no deaths were recorded, with the exception of one drunk driver. A tourist guide showed his frustration in not being able to continue his tour program due to the fact that many armed groups had taken over other towns and that roads were closed, whereupon a light-skinned man named Marcos who was standing among the armed men nearby, responded: "Please excuse the inconveniences but this is a revolution".[10]

When the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional--EZLN (National Liberation Zapatista Army), came out of the jungles of Chiapas on New Year's Day, 1994, it generated contradictory reactions from government officials, intellectuals and the media. In the midst of the debate over whether the armed groups of the EZLN had come from Central America or had been organized by revolutionaries who recruited peasants and indigenous people, the

[9] The majority of inhabitants of San Cristóbal (the city with the highest rate of tourism in the state of Chiapas), refer to themselves as "coletos" to identify themselves as the descendants of Spaniards, and therefore distinct from the indigenous population.
[10] The Guardian, quoted by Carlos Tello Diaz in *La rebelión de las cañadas: Origen y ascenso del EZLN* (Mexico D.F: Ediciones Cal y Arena 2000).

rebels announced their first communiqué. They claimed to be an indigenous movement having the right to fight for fundamental human needs and rights, and they appealed to the Mexican Constitution of 1917 which protected and guaranteed a social contract between the state and the people of Mexico, especially with workers and peasants. Parallel to this, the rebels laid claim Article 39 of the Mexican constitution which entitles citizens with the right to modify or alter their government. The EZLN called for the removal of the current federal government, declaring it an illegitimate government which had emerged from electoral fraud and which was threatening to terminate the social contract. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari[11] was accused by the rebels of being the main actor in the signing of their death sentence; i.e., the North American Free Trade Agreement, (NAFTA). Now over ten years after the rebellion, the Zapatista demands still remain unmet, while new armed groups continue to make their appearance. These events lead us to the central questions of this chapter. How can we understand the growth of armed movements in Mexico? More specifically, why do Mexican peasants and indigenous peoples and rebel?

Marxist studies have indicated that organized rebellions can only originate from organized workers. In Marxist thought, capitalistic forces inevitably transform peasants into salaried workers, bringing about the disappearance of the peasantry through the creation of a labor reserve army for the benefit of capitalists. These exploited workers will eventually organize, rebel and fight for liberation. These studies have therefore implied the existence of rather passive peasant and indigenous peoples, which participate only as consumers exploited by capitalists (Cook 1995, Stavenhagen 1978). Peasant and indigenous participation, is mainly perceived as a reaction to external forces, and reflective of their inability to resist the consequences of capitalistic transformation and pressures on their community life. More

[11] President Carlos Salinas de Gortari was a Harvard graduate in economics and was favored by the Clinton Administration to preside over the World Trade Organization.

recently, a similar line of reasoning can be found in other reports that highlight expanding globalization alone as the force responsible for the formation of armed movements as a means of resistance.

With a growing number of revolutionary movements in peasant and indigenous regions (see Box 1), the limitations of these preceding views to fully explain such movements, and their lack of effectiveness in dealing with said movements becomes obvious. An example of this limitation is evident in the approach taken by the Mexican government toward the Zapatista rebellion. According to the state, the uprising in Chiapas was a peculiar event of 1994, a revolutionary movement in a particular year, led and organized by a handful of leaders of Marxist origin. Consequently, to end the conflict, the incarceration and conviction of leaders responsible for the rebellion was seen as vital. The reasoning followed that by apprehending the leaders, of the EZLN in this case, the movement would become headless and then disappear. To reach this goal, according to this perspective, it would be necessary to search, detect, and destroy military as well as non-military Zapatista bases, and the 1995 military offensive reflected this logic.[12] Critics have pointed out that this general strategy, in fact, does not differ notably from the strategy applied in various other countries in Latin America, supported in many cases by the United States (Blum 1995). This assessment, known as the police approach by its opponents, has been the ideological base of political and economic policies initiated due to the uprisings in southern Mexico. It is argued here, therefore, that conflict escalation occurs due to more complex reasons than the formation of organized groups by violent leaders.

[12] On February 9, 1995, the Mexican army carried out a major military offensive in an attempt to apprehend Marcos, (the spokesperson for the Zapatistas) and wipe out the Zapatistas. Though unsuccessful in apprehending Marcos, the government revealed at this time the "true identity" of Marcos, stating that he was Sebastián Guillén Vicente, under 40 years of age, a former student of philosophy at the UNAM (the National Autonomous University of Mexico), and a communications professor at the UAM (the Autonomous Metropolitan University).

BOX 1: **GUERILLA GROUPS IN MEXICO**

Although there is no available data on the exact number, it is calculated that there are at least twelve and possibly as many as thirty or more armed groups in Mexico. Some have made themselves known to the media or to the government, others have remained anonymous. The known armed movements are the following: Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo, Partido de los Pobres, Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria, Comando Urbano Lacandones Patria Nueva, Frente Urbano Zapatista, Partido Revolucionario Obrero Clandestino Unión del Pueblo, Unión Campesina Independiente, Movimiento Veintitrés de Septiembre, Liga Comunista Veintitrés de Septiembre, Liga Comunista Espartaco, Frente Revolucionario del Pueblo, Fuerzas Revolucionarias Armadas del Pueblo, and Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación.[1] However, new groups continue to appear, increasing the number. The Comando Jaramillista Morelense appeared on May 25, 2004 in the state of Morelos, near Mexico City. Even more recently, El Colectivo Revolucionario-Francisco Javier Mina, Organización Insurgente 1o de Mayo, Brigada de Ajusticiamiento 2 de Diciembre, and Brigadas Populares de Liberación—BPL, appeared on the outskirts of the city of Oaxaca in September 2006.



Sources: *La Jornada*. 2 December 1997 and CIEPAC, available from http://www.ciepac.org

The origins of the revolutionary Zapatista movement have also been linked directly to extreme conditions of poverty in the region. In statements, the governors of the three southern states (Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Guerrero) argued that the poverty map in the region coincided with the map of guerrilla activity. According to this hypothesis, increasing levels of poverty create the conditions for rebellion.[13] Consequently the issue of poverty cannot be dismissed without giving it fair consideration. In the next section of this chapter we will look at poverty conditions in Mexico as one of the possible reasons for rebellions. Other possible reasons will be discussed in the subsequent section.

A. Reports on Poverty

Significant reports on poverty were done in 1984, yet due to the contrasting differences in their conclusions, a brief explanation of their methodology is included. Included in the second part are three additional reports, the Levy Report, the Conapo Report and the Human Index Report-Mexico (the first of its kind released in Mexico). However, it is necessary to mention certain elements before discussing the reports. First, the most common measurement of poverty across different economies has been that of income levels, and their comparison to one or more indicators of standards of income inequality, (e.g., the Lorenz curve). Second, this type of measurement of poverty has provided the basis for the implementation of a general method that has been used to measure poverty in various countries; a method often called "the indirect method". This indirect method has focused mainly on the comparison of the actual existing levels of income with the level of income required for individuals and families to meet their basic

[13] Canal 2, Televisa, Mexico City. September 8, 2001. Governor José Murat of Oaxaca, Pablo Salazar of Chiapas and Governor Salazar Mendiguchía of Guerrero agreed that the essence of the growing guerrilla movement was due mainly to the existing levels of poverty and to a lesser degree, to the high level of political centralization and impunity.

needs. In other words, it measures the monetary *means* to fulfill basic needs (Sen 1981:27). This income-measuring methodology grew out of the need for measuring the well being of people in a society. Among its pioneers was economist Colin Clark, who worked on statistical comparisons of income levels around the world at the beginning of the 1900s.[14]

In general, the application of this income-measuring methodology follows certain steps. First, it defines the "basic needs" of a family or an individual in a specific context. Second, the cost of a basket of goods that fulfills those basic needs is determined. Third, the cost of the basket is calculated, which in turn establishes the poverty line. Fourth, the level of income generated by the individual or family is compared to the cost of the basket to determine the classification of the family as poor or not poor. Finally, families or individuals that fall below the poverty line are added together to obtain the total number of individuals or families in poverty (P) which is divided by the population Tp) to obtain a poverty rate index (*pr*). The formula is presented as follows:

$$\boldsymbol{pr = P / Tp}$$

Although the first four studies presented here follow the principle of the indirect method, each has its own variations or adjustments to circumstances. Having mentioned these important elements and notes on methodology we now go to the reports themselves.

The first report to be considered is a study done by CEPAL, whose acronym in English is ECLA, (the Economic Commission

[14] The lack of income or the existence of money in society gained relevance as the idea of development spread. Indeed, the level of income took relevance over people's identity, cultural diversity, wants, and aspirations of different societies. Aspects such as cultural perspectives on economic living, consumption, practice of sufficiency or frugality were not differentiated.

of Latin America), an organism of the United Nations that has carried out several studies on poverty throughout Latin America.[15]

The results of the CEPAL study were the following:

Table 1: Incidence of Poverty in Mexico
% of the population
1984
CEPAL

	Rural	Urban	Total
Total			
Extreme poverty	24	8.0	13.0
Moderated poverty	27	22.0	24.0
Total poverty	51	30.0	37.0

Source: Guillermo Trejo, *Contra la pobreza: por una estratégia de política social*. (Mexico D.F. Ediciones Cal y Arena, Centro para el Desarrollo A.C 1992).

According to this study, 37% of Mexicans were below the poverty line; in other words almost four out of every ten people were poor. 1.3% lived in extreme poverty and 2.4% were classified as moderated poor. Therefore, this study suggested that in Mexico poverty reached tremendous magnitudes, and that poverty reached higher levels (percentage wise) among Mexicans that lived in rural areas.

[15] The CEPAL's methodology used in this study was as follows. First, the cost of a basket that fulfills the basic nutritional needs of the population was calculated, taking into account the predominant patterns of consumption as well as the availability of goods and their relative prices. This cost was set as the extreme poverty line. Then, this cost was multiplied by two to obtain the estimated urban "intermediate or moderate" poverty line and by 1.75 to obtain the estimated rural poverty line. Moderated poverty meant that the income of households was more than enough to buy food included in the basket but less than enough to buy the non-food components of the minimum basket.

A second study was done by Boltvinik and Hernández Laos. These authors calculated the extreme poverty line as the cost of an "infra-minimun" basket of goods. The basket of goods chosen by this study was a basket as defined in 1983 by the Coordinación General del Plan Nacional de Zonas Deprimidas y Grupos Marginados—COPLAMAR, (General Coordination of the National Plan of Depressed Zones and Marginalized Groups). COPLAMAR was created by the federal government to develop policies dealing with issues of poverty. In contrast to CEPAL's study, COPLAMAR's basket was broadened to also include, energy and the means of food preparation, housing, health and education. The basket's cost was calculated based on the national price index of the first quarter of 1984. The moderated poverty line was calculated by adding the basket defined above plus the monetary cost of the "normative basket of essential satisfactors" also defined by COPLAMAR. The data used in this study were adjusted to be compatible with data from the national accounts records. Their report was the following:

Table 2: Poverty Incidence in Mexico
Percentages of Population
1984
Boltvinik-Hernandez Laos

	Rural	Urban	Total
Extreme Poverty	52.9	20	29.9
Moderate Poverty	23.2	29.6	28.6
Total	76.1	49.6	58.5

Source: Guillermo Trejo, *Contra la pobreza: por una estratégia de política social*. (Mexico D.F. Ediciones Cal y Arena, Centro para el Desarrollo A.C 1992).

The results (Table 2) showed that almost six out of ten Mexicans were living in poverty. Of these six, nearly three were

living in extreme poverty and three in moderate poverty. This study revealed that if education, health and other relevant variables are considered as a part of the minimum basket of goods that a family or individual needs to function, then, the problem of poverty takes on greater dimensions and implications. Again, this study confirmed that poverty was a remarkable phenomenon in rural areas, and that moderate poverty was greater in urban areas.

The third study was done by Santiago Levy. In this study the extreme poverty line was calculated by adding an additional 25% to the cost of the basket that was defined by COPLAMAR as minimum, in an attempt to adjust the basket to "its real costs". The results appear in column 2 of Table 3. The real cost of the basket identified the depth and distribution of poverty, though the definitions of depth and distribution were not provided. In contrast with the two previous studies however, Levy's data was not adjusted to the data of the national accounts, and according to critics of the study, it consequently over-stated the levels of poverty.

Table 3 Incidence of Poverty in Mexico
Percentage of Population
1984
Santiago Levy

	1		2	
	A	B	A	B
EXTREME POVERTY	19.5	10.1	2.6	1.2
Rural	37.2	21.1	5.7	2.7
Urban	10.0	4.1	0.9	0.3
MODERATE POVERTY	61.7	71.1	27.8	29.2
Rural	59.5	75.6	40.9	43.9
Urban	62.8	68.7	21.1	21.7
TOTAL POVERTY	81.2	81.2	30.4	30.4
Rural	96.7	96.7	46.6	46.6
Urban	72.8	72.8	22.0	22.0

1: Arithmetic addition
2: Addition taking into account the distribution and depth of poverty
A: The incidence of poverty is determined by the cost of the basket defined by COPLAMAR
B: The incidence of poverty is obtained using a basket with a minimum cost calculated by the author

Source: Santiago Levy, "Poverty Alleviation in Mexico," *The World Bank, Working Papers* WPS 679, Washington, (1991).

According to these results, three of every ten Mexicans lived in poverty in 1984. However, the majority of people suffered from moderated poverty. This study also confirms the high incidence of poverty in rural areas. These three studies, though following the same methodology (the indirect method or the head-count method), have obtained different results, leading us to make certain observations. First, it is expected that data on poverty may vary greatly depending on the criteria used to define the poverty line. Also, some of these reports adjusted their data to the levels of inflation and the "real" or "inflated" cost of a basket of goods and services. Similarly some of the reports adjusted their data to be

compatible with national accounts. Second, this methodology, though straightforward, contains many difficulties. As Sen has pointed out, the ***pr*** index presented in the general formula does not differentiate between someone that is barely below the poverty line and an individual who is extremely poor or living in starvation. Levy's study moves in this direction, searching for an answer to the question of how poor are the poor. However, in general the limitation of the indirect method lies in the fact that it does not focus on measuring the severity or intensity of poverty, which is not, in fact the goal of the Levy's study. The measurement of the degree of poverty presents greater challenges. Also, the ***pr*** index does not discriminate among the preferences of the individual or "family" regarding consumption of the basket of goods nor cultural circumstances. Third, using income as an economic indicator may potentially lead to classifying as poor an individual who chooses lower-income employment for reasons of stress reduction or for personal satisfaction. Finally, the ***pr*** index in the introductory formula above, tends to be insensitive to transfers of income among the poor as well as transfers from the poor to the rich (Sen 1981). Nevertheless, the methodology has made it possible to trace the evolution of poverty over the years.

Evolution of Poverty

To appreciate the evolution of poverty, this section focuses on two studies which use the same method as the above reports. First is the study done by PRONASOL (a governmental institution) and a study by Boltvinik and Enrique Hernández Laos. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Evolution of the Incidence of Poverty in Mexico 1960-1987

	1960	1970	1977	1981	1987
Population*	36.0	50.7	63.3	71.4	81.2
Extreme Poverty**	56.7	39.3	29.7	19.2	21.3
Moderate Poverty	19.7	22.3	24.5	25.8	29.6
Total Poverty**	76.4	61.5	64.2	45.0	50.9

* in millions
** in percentage of total population

Source: Guillermo Trejo, *Contra la pobreza: por una estratégia de política social*. (Mexico D.F. Ediciones Cal y Arena, Centro para el Desarrollo A.C 1992).

According to this report, poverty has persisted at high levels from 1960 to 1987. However, total poverty as a percentage of total population decreased from 1960 to 1981. Also, extreme poverty steadily declined through the same period. Nevertheless, in 1981 13 million people, 19% of the total population, were still identified as living in extreme poverty. Additionally, moderated poverty increased from 1960 to 1987 (from 7.2 to 24 million). This data suggests that many individuals who previously lived in extreme poverty crossed over into moderate poverty. Mexican economists have explained this later tendency as a result of immigration from rural to urban areas, urban subsidies, the oil boom and steady economic growth during this period.[16] In fact, it was during this period that the Mexican economy maintained a level of stabilization with fixed exchange rates and lower inflation rates (4.22% annually) (Soria 2000).

[16] Between 1950 and 1980, the Mexican economy achieved a rate of economic growth above 6% annually, and employment and real wages grew at a constant rate until 1976. Between 1951 and 1972, inflation rates were kept below 5%. See Victor L. Urquidi, *México en la globalizacón: condiciones y requisitos de un desarrollo sustentable y equitativo*, i*nforme de la sección del Club de Roma* (Mexico City: FCE 1996)

In 1982, Mexico declared that it was unable to pay its foreign debt, and from 1982 on we see the beginning of a growth in total poverty, increasing from 45% to 50% by 1987. Additional studies have shown that by 1990 the level of total poverty reached 63.3% (Soria 2000).

A second notable report is the study by Boltvinik-Hernandez Laos, presented in Table 5. This second study coincided with the previous study, with results also indicating that total poverty declined from 1963 to 1981 and then increased from 1981 to 1988. We can say that the gains of the economy from 1960s and 1970's were lost in the first years of the 1980's. This is why economists refer to the decade of the 1980's as the "lost decade" for Mexico.

Table 5 Evolution of the Incidence of Poverty in Mexico 1963-1988
Boltvinik-Hernandez Laos

	1963	1968	1977	1981	1984	1988
Population*	40.8	47.9	63.8	71.4	76.5	83.0
Total Poverty**	77.5	72.6	58.0	48.5	58.5	59.0

*in millions
**percentage of population

Source: Banamex: *Mexico Social 1990-91*. Estudios Sociales, Banamex, Mexico, 1992 and Julio Boltvinik, "Pobreza y pobreza extrema" in *Distribución del ingreso y políticas sociales Tomo 1* (Mexico D.F.: Juan Pablos Editor S.A. 1995) and "The Poverty in Mexico: Methodologies and Evolution. *Salud Pública de México*. México D.F.: Vol.37, No 4, (1993) 288-*eoa*

BOX 2. THE DEBT CRISIS

In 1982 Mexico was the first country in Latin America to declare bankruptcy. The crisis, however, was connected to previous events. During the 1960's the U.S. experienced the longest period of economic growth it had known during war-time. It increased spending abroad as the Vietnam War escalated, as well as at home in social programs. U.S. investment increased in Europe and Latin America and in so doing also sustained substantial losses in gold. Inflation rates climbed from 2 % in 1968 to 4.7% at the beginning of 1969. During 1969, inflation rates reached 5.3%, causing the Nixon administration to introduce measures to freeze prices and wages. Also in the same year the president eliminated the practice of exchanging dollars for gold (McEachern 2000). However, between 1969 and 1972, the industrialized nations generated more international currencies than in the entire history of the world until 1969. Ninety percent of the increase in currency came from these countries (Goudzwaard 1995). Part of the reason for the U.S. monetary expansion was the *seignorage* advantage. This advantage consists of the difference between the actual cost of making the money and the value that the money possesses on the international exchange market. Consequently, the value of these dollars dropped, and in 1973 several oil producers formed the OPEC bloc and tripled their oil prices to cope with devaluated dollars and expensive grain prices due to crop failures around the world. Developing countries unable to print international currency to buy oil had to borrow. Due to an oversupply of currency they were able to borrow at low interest rates. This first oil shock (1974) enabled Latin American countries to depend more heavily on credit supported by the low interests rates offered in the international markets. In Latin America, Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil were perceived by investors as safe and profitable clients, since the prices of exporting goods (such as coffee) from these countries tripled between 1975 and 1977 and the prices of cotton, sugar, tin and beef increased as well. Oil-exporting countries like Mexico and Venezuela borrowed heavily during the 70s and the beginning of the 80s to finance infrastructure projects in industry and education. Other countries in Latin America borrowed heavily also to finance their trade and budget deficits, originating both from private and public sectors. In 1978, industrialized countries such as the U.S. had learned from the 1973 oil shock, and immediately after the shock many OCDE countries, led by the United States and Great Britain, shifted their monetary policies to control inflation and also raised interest rates sharply. In contrast, the debt of most Latin American countries carried floating interest rates (following recommendations from the IMF and World Bank) which caused vulnerability and eventually an increasing amount of debt. Higher interest rates in dollar deposits and growing concern by Latin American elites about the future of the reforms undertaken, caused the owners of deposits to move part of their deposits out of their countries, creating tremendous capital flight from Latin America into bank accounts in the U.S. and other wealthy countries. The second oil shock then hit oil-importing countries such as Brazil, which depended heavily on oil imports and had the largest amount of outstanding debt. Yet commodity prices of Latin American countries did not increase this time, and they began running huge current account deficits. By the end of the 70s, most of the countries in Latin America were heavily indebted, and this time the global liquidity was tighter; the easy credit times were gone. Developing economies were able to refinance their debts and expand them, but at higher interest rates, which made interest payments higher, amounting to several percentage points of GDP for many countries (Franko 1999). As global liquidity became tighter, some of the banks started to demand their money back. The debt crisis had become undeniable.

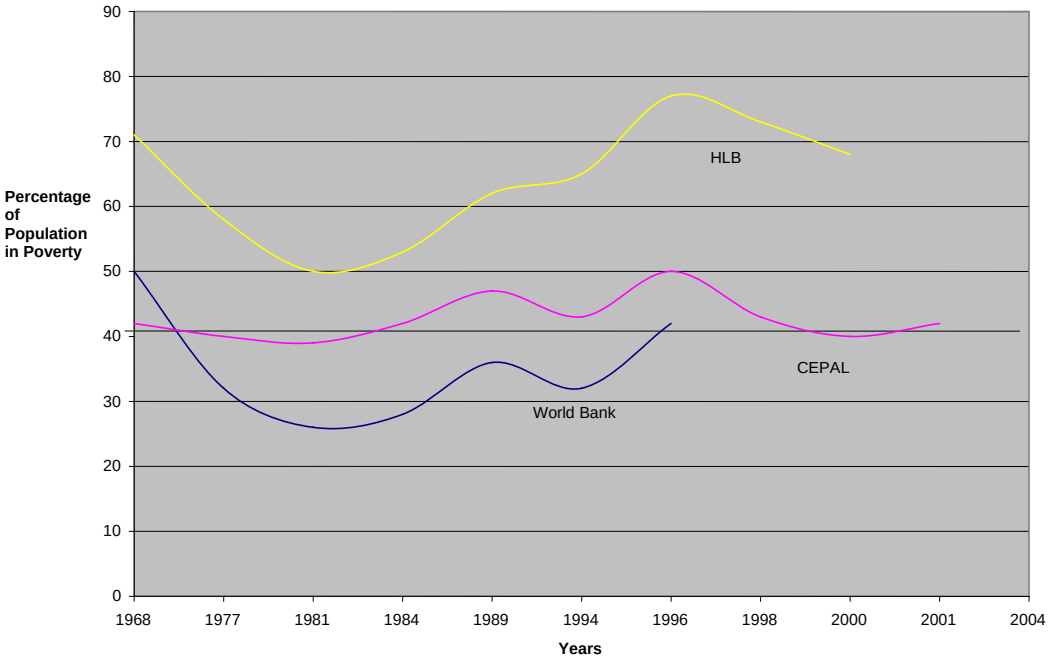
However, the achievements of economic growth between 1960 and 1970, referred to as the *milagro mexicano* (the Mexican miracle), were blurred by different studies and reports showing that inequality was increasing and even reaching extreme levels. Two official studies done during this period point out a worsening in equity in the Mexican economy.[17] The study by the University of Texas concluded that Mexico was the country with the greatest inequality in Latin America. This was confirmed in 1975 when the World Bank reported that the poorest 10% of the population received 0.62 of total income, while the top 10% received 31% of total income. The World Bank report also showed that in 1963, if the population were divided by thirds, the top one third of the population received 51.41% of total income and the lowest one third received 11. 05%. Moreover, in 1975 these percentages worsened to 60.18% and 4.71% respectively. This study showed that in spite of the economic achievements of the Mexican economy, disparities kept increasing and were reaching extreme levels. In summary it can be said that during the period of 1960-1980, economic expansion coexisted with a decreasing total poverty though accompanied by growing inequalities. Recent studies by Boltvinik, moreover, have shown that by 1992, total poverty had increased above 60% (1995).

Graph 1 compares three recent reports on the trend of poverty in Mexico. The first was done by CEPAL, covering the period from 1968-2001. The second projection was done by the World Bank for the period of 1968-1996. The methodology used in the study was not explained. The third study, done by Hernández Laos and J. Boltvinik (HLB) covered the period 1968-2000. In this latter study, the poverty line was defined as the minimum basket of goods and services set by COPLAMAR.

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[17] Lyndon B. Johnson School for Public Affairs, University of Texas/Austin, *Growth and Equity in Mexico*, Case Studies in Development Assistance, No 5 (Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, n. d.) p. 3 1977-1978. Also World Bank *Special Study of the Mexican Economy: Major Policy Issues and Prospects,* vol. 1 Main Report (May 30, 1979) Report No 230-ME (Washington, D C: World Bank).

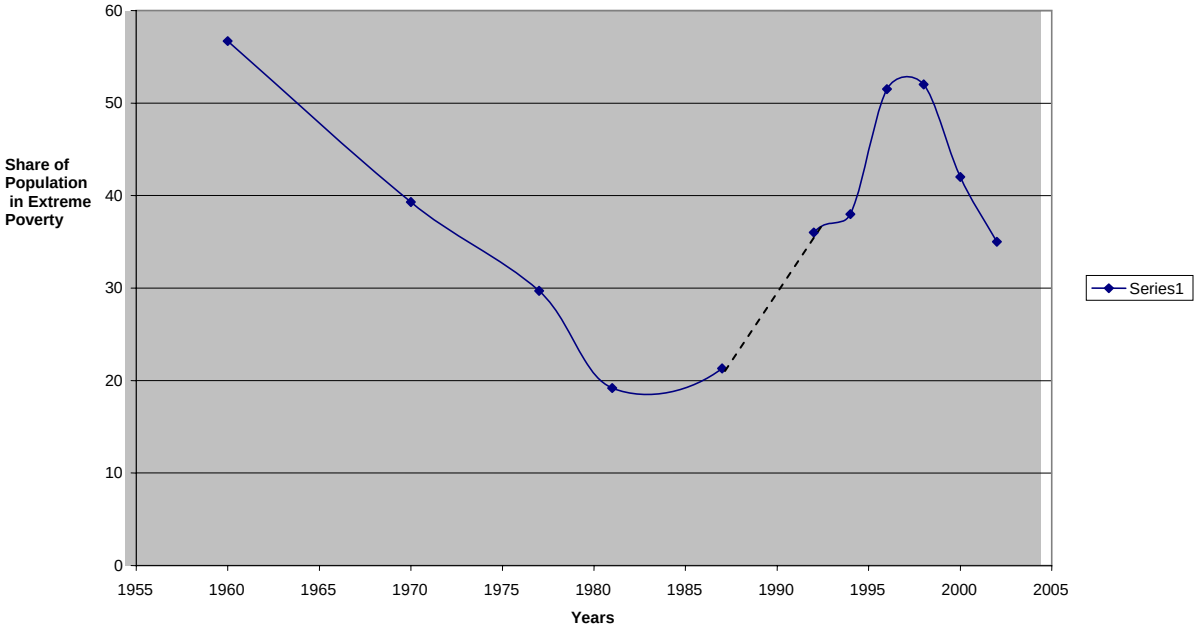
Graph 1 Mexico: Three Reports on the Evolution of Poverty, 1968-2002



Source: Damián, Araceli and Julio Boltvinik ,"Evolución y características de la pobreza en México". *Comercio Exterior* 53, no. 6, (June 2003)

In observing the results of these studies, it is worth mention that though all three studies are based on different definitions of the poverty line, all three show that poverty declined during the period between 1968 and 1981 and then rose steadily until 1996. Secondly, the HLB and CEPAL studies indicate that poverty in Mexico was more acute and widespread in 1996 than in 1968. Lastly, this scenario reflects nearly three decades lost in the battle against poverty (Damián and Boltvinik, 2003).

Graph 2 Mexico: Overview of Poverty Trends for Extreme Poverty 1960-2004



Source: For 1960 to 1987 see Consejo Consultivo del Programa Nacional de Solidaridad: "El combate a la pobreza: lineamientos programáticos" *El Nacional*, México, 1990, p. 20. For the period of 1992 to 2004 the food-based extreme poverty line was used, see *Poverty in Mexico*: *An Assessment of Conditions, Trends and Government Strategy*. (Mexico: World Bank, 2004)

Graph 2 contains data on the evolution of extreme poverty based on the conservative reports of two different periods; one a governmental report by PRONASOL, and the other by the World Bank, both of which are based on poverty as defined by minimum food requirements. Graphs 1 and 2 coincide in pointing out that a) poverty as well as extreme poverty declined between 1968 and 1981, b) total poverty as well as extreme poverty increased from 1981 to 1996, and c) that the crises of 1981-1989 and 1994-1996 represented major reversals in economic gains.

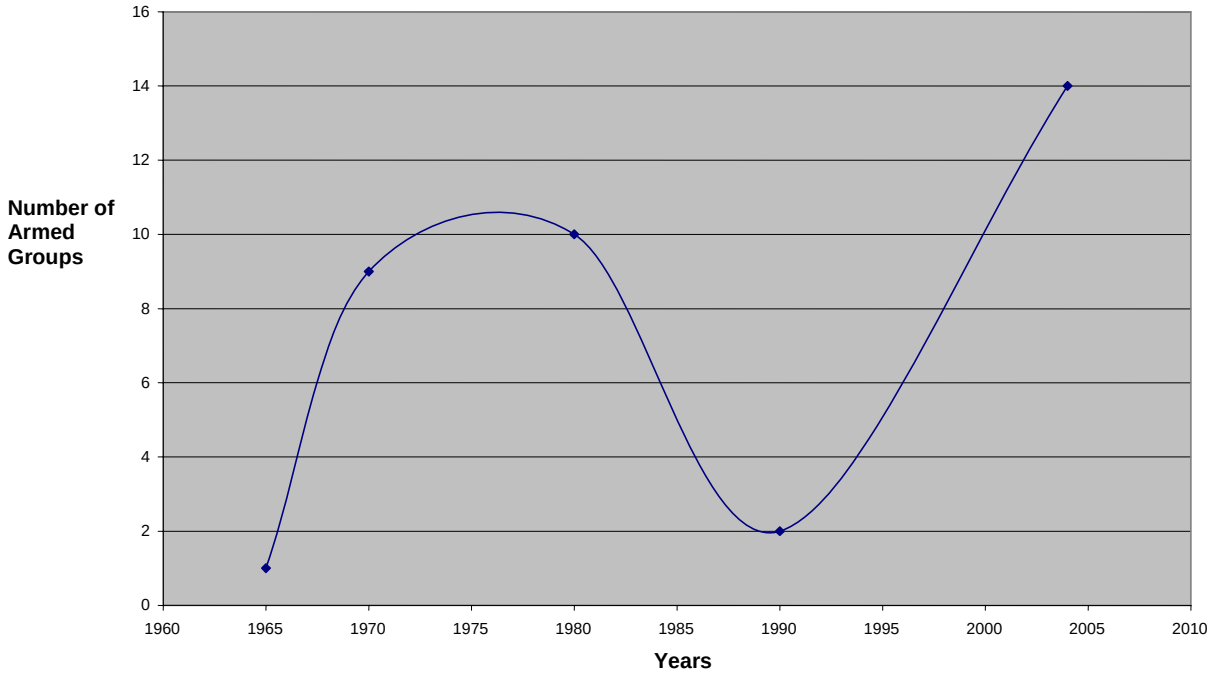
The descending trend from the end of the 1990's to 2002 has been a recent cause for optimism by the World Bank, even though both the World Bank and the Mexican government have recognized that the level of extreme and total poverty in 2002 is only slightly below the pre-crisis level (World Bank 2004).

Does Poverty Instigate Armed Rebellions?

Although consensus has not been reached concerning the magnitude of poverty in Mexico, the different reports provide us with a sense of the seriousness of the situation. The high levels of poverty and extreme poverty have been sharply criticized not only by political opposition groups in Mexico, but also by radical groups that have challenged the political as well as the economic process in Mexico. The question that occupies us here is the possible relationship between conditions of extreme poverty and the increasing appearances of armed opposition groups. The armed opposition has declared that the conditions of poverty and inequality are those created by the *irresponsible actions* of economic and political *actors,* and not merely caused by economic events. This fact suggests that an analysis of economic variables or processes alone is insufficient in attempting to understand grievances and the possible use of violent acts by subordinated groups. Serious consideration is here given to the idea that as long as armed groups perceive that poverty conditions are largely the consequence of the irresponsible action of actors, (who through their irresponsibility have eroded trust and become illegitimate representatives), they will continue to challenge, attack, and sabotage the economic and political arrangements in Mexican society.

Extreme poverty and total poverty reached their lowest levels between 1968 and 1981, and Graph 3 shows that during this period the number of armed groups increased. For instance, an umbrella group called PROCUP appeared during the 1960's under which five affiliated groups existed. The five groups consisted of the following: Fuerzas Revolucionarias Armadas del Pueblo--FRAP, (Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People), Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre (Communist League of September 23rd), Frente Urbano Zapatista—FUZ, (Urban Zapatista Front), Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria—MAR, (Revolutionary Action

Graph 3 Mexico: The Appearances of Armed Groups 1965-2004



Source: Built by author based on data from Centro de Investigación Económica y Política de Acción Comunitaria (CIEPAC) A.C., available from http://www.ciepac.org and Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de los Movimientos Armados, (CHIMA) A.C., reports from *Proceso* available from http://proceso.mx.com and CEDEMA available from http://usuarios.lycos.es/cedema/

Movement), and the Partido Proletario de América, (the Proletariat Party of America).Many of the leaders however, were killed by special military units during the repression of the 1970s.[18] Genaro Vasquez, a leader in Guerrero of the Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria—ACNR (National Revolutionary Civic Association), died in a car accident in 1972. Lucio Cabañas, a teacher in Guerrero and leader of the Partido de los Pobres (Party of the Poor), died in an ambush in 1974. Consequently, by the end

[18] The name "23 de Septiembre" itself was chosen to honor the earliest clandestine revolutionary leaders who were killed, Professor Arturo Gamiz and Dr. Pablo Gomez, who died during an assault they launched against the "Maderas" military barracks on September 23, 1965 in the Northern state of Chihuahua. The Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre was formed in 1973 by activists, some of whom were socialists and some of whom were militants inspired by Liberation Theology.

of the 1980s only two groups were known to promote guerrilla strategy and tactics to achieve social and political change —the Partido Revolucionario Obrero Clandestino—Unión del Pueblo--PROCUP, (Clandestine Worker Revolutionary Party—Union of the People), and the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, (Communist League of September 23rd)[19].

With the economic crisis of 1982, the living conditions for the majority of Mexicans deteriorated due to the effects of the massive external debt. To affirm that poverty generates rebels would lead us to believe that the 1980's should have been a fertile period for the emergence of armed groups; but in fact, armed groups during that period were leaderless and struggling for survival. The period of 1990-2004 represents the most dynamic period of growth of armed groups. The number of armed groups rose steadily even though there was a noticeable decline in total as well as extreme poverty after 1996. Therefore, it is argued here that the increasing number of armed groups cannot be explained merely by the presence of poverty. In the following section we explore other factors that may be relevant in explaining the increase of violent groups.

B. Why People Rebel: The Relevance of Perceived Economic Entitlements and Unfulfilled Expectations

In the search for links between socio-economic conditions and conflict escalation, or more specifically socio-economic links to rebellions, we turn to the work of James Davis and Ted Robert Gurr and also recent authors that represent the school of Relative Deprivation (RD). According to James Davis, revolutions occur only if several conditions are present.

Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period

[19] See Armando Bartra. Guerrero Bronco: Campesinos, ciudadanos y guerrilleros en la Costa Grande. (México D.F.: Ediciones sinfiltro, 1996)

> of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal. The all-important effect on the minds of people in a particular society is to produce, during the former period, an expectation of continued ability to satisfy needs--which continue to rise--and, during the latter, a mental state of anxiety and frustration when manifest reality breaks away from anticipated realty. The actual state of socio-economic development is less significant than the expectation that past progress, now blocked, can and must continue in the future (Davis 1972).

Davis adds that political stability depends ultimately on people's state of mind and mood in a society. This element, the state of mind of the unsatisfied, therefore, becomes the determinant par excellence of a revolution. In following Tocqueville's analysis of the French revolution, Davies states that revolutions do not generally occur in impoverished societies for the simple fact that people that live in constant poverty usually endure it. The preoccupation for survival, as research shows, occupies their time and hunger causes them to withdraw from social life. If individuals withdraw, they may do so to be alone or to seek solidarity with their families. Davis concludes that it is not hunger that produces revolutionaries, but rather that the conditions in which revolutionaries may be produced are those in which people have experienced economic benefits and hold expectations for the future and later find that their expectations become frustrated and are not fulfilled. As the gap between what people expect and what they actually get increases, the possibility of a revolt increases. Therefore, Davies rejects what is known as the misery thesis--that poverty by itself generates revolutions. In fact, contrary to Karl Marx's thesis that workers will rebel to break their chains, Davies argues that if people have to choose between losing their lives and living with chains, people will choose chains. Model 1 (see Appendix) represents Davis' proposal regarding the pre-conditions for a revolution, known also as the "j" curve of economic growth.

In 1970, Ted Robert Gurr in his book *Why Men Rebel* presents an improved version of Davies' hypothesis. Based on the hypothesis of Relative Deprivation (RD), Gurr argues that collective violence is correlated to the discontent of members of a society. The source of the discontent lies in the perceived gap between what they have and what they should have. This gap is called relative deprivation. Relative deprivation opens the door to frustration and aggression mechanisms that lead and have in fact, preceded violent actions. In 1972 Gurr wrote:

> My basic premise is that the necessary precondition for violent civil conflict is relative deprivation, defined as the actors' perception of discrepancy between their *value expectations* and their environment's apparent *value capabilities.* Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are justifiably entitled…the referents of value capabilities are to be found largely in the social and physical environment, they are the conditions that determine people's perceived chances of getting or keeping the values they legitimately expect to attain. The occurrence of civil violence presupposes the likelihood of relative deprivation among substantial numbers of individuals in a society; concomitantly, the more severe is relative deprivation, the greater are the likelihood and intensity of civil violence (Gurr 1972).

In summary, Gurrs' hypothesis proposes three patterns of Relative Depravation that an individual can experience when comparing him/herself to other points in time of his/her life (see Box 3 in Appendix). The first pattern is *decremental deprivation,* relating to the fact that although people's expectations remain constant, their attainments or capabilities are failing to meet those expectations. Individuals are angry because of the loss of what they had at one point in time in the past. This situation can trigger collective violence if material production declines; e.g.,

deprivation from social order, or political freedom once enjoyed. The second pattern is *progressive deprivation*, also known as the "J-curve", and is experienced with constant and growing expectations combined with falling capabilities or attainments. In this case, growing expectations are derived from a continuous improvement in the economy or political system. However, capabilities begin to fall and the conditions for a revolution are set as people become frustrated and angry at not having what they are entitled to. Economic depression in a growing economy combined with the loss of the fulfillment of basic needs is a good example of this.

The third pattern is *aspirational deprivation*, which describes the disparity between higher desires, entitlements, and constant attainments that become insufficient to achieve higher levels of aspirations. People are angry because they feel hopeless when trying to attain new and higher levels of expectations.

The RD hypothesis, though widely accepted, was later altered by more recent findings on collective violence. For example, Edward Muller's findings on racial disturbances in Iowa in the late 1960's showed that feelings of relative deprivation were not always present in social unrest. Muller reported that the main reasons for violent action in the case of disturbances in Iowa, was a low degree of trust in political authorities such as the police, rather than relative deprivation sentiments. "RD does not seem to matter," he concluded (Brush 1996). Clark McPhail, a sociologist who also reported on social unrest in U.S. cities, found that the perception of black minorities that they were being mistreated by the police was a fact that led them to protest and commit violent acts. The RD hypothesis, McPhail concluded, did not result relevant. Competing explanations for violent movements have led Gurr and other advocates to abandon the RD hypothesis in its original form (Brush 1996). In spite of this, current researchers tend to cite the hypothesis in a favorable way (Brush 1996). It is now understood that although frustration may not be the only

cause, it can play an important role in understanding why people rebel.

This modified hypothesis has been the basis for most recent developments and research on social justice, social comparison, system justification, and social dominance (Ellemers 2002). Gurr's modified hypothesis can be a useful tool for our analysis of the uprising in Chiapas. To some extent, the communiqués from the rebels in Chiapas reveal the presence of relative deprivation and frustration as can be appreciated in their first declaration (see Box 4).

Box 4: Lacandona Declaration

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO
TO OUR MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil. Later, the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. We the dispossessed are millions, and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a 70 year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sold-out groups. They are the same ones that opposed Hidalgo and Morelos, the same ones that betrayed Vicente Guerrero, the same ones that sold half our country to the foreign invader, the same ones that imported a European prince to rule our country, the same ones that formed the "scientific" Porfirsta dictatorship, the same ones that opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, the same ones that massacred the railroad workers in 1958 and the students in 1968, the same ones that today take everything from us, absolutely everything.

To prevent the continuation of the above and as our last hope after having tried to utilize all legal means based on our Constitution, we go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39 which says:

> "National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government."

Therefore, according to our constitution, we declare the following to the Mexican federal army, the pillar of the Mexican dictatorship from which we suffer, monopolized by a one-party system and led by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the maximum and illegitimate federal executive that today holds power.

According to this Declaration of War, we ask that other powers of the nation advocate to restore the legitimacy and the stability of the nation by overthrowing the dictator.

We also ask that international organizations and the International Red Cross watch over and regulate our battles, so that our efforts are carried out while still protecting our civilian population. We declare now and always that we are subject to the Geneva Accord, forming the EZLN as our fighting arm of our liberation struggle. We have the Mexican people on our side, we have the beloved tri-colored flag, highly respected by our insurgent fighters. We use black and red in our uniform as the symbol of our working people on strike. Our flag carries the following letters, "EZLN," Zapatista Army of National Liberation, and we always carry our flag into combat.

Beforehand, we refuse any effort to disgrace our just cause by accusing us of being drug traffickers, drug guerrillas, thieves, or other names that might by used by our enemies. Our struggle follows the constitution, which is held in high regard by its call for justice and equality.

Therefore, according to this declaration of war, we give our military forces, the EZLN, the following orders:

First: Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities.

Second: Respect the lives of our prisoners and turn over all wounded to the International Red Cross.

Third: Initiate summary judgments against all soldiers of the Mexican federal army and the political police that have received training or have been paid by foreigners, that are accused of being traitors to our country, and against all those that have repressed and treated badly the civil population and robbed or stolen from or attempted crimes against the good of the people.

Fourth: Form new troops with all those Mexicans that show their interest in joining our struggle, including those that, being enemy soldiers, turn themselves in without having fought against us, and promise to take orders from the General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Fifth: We ask for the unconditional surrender of the enemy's headquarters before we begin any combat to avoid any loss of lives.

Sixth: Suspend the robbery of our natural resources in the areas controlled by the EZLN.

To the People of Mexico: We, the men and women, full and free, are conscious that the war that we have declared is our last resort, but also a just one. The dictators have been applying an undeclared genocidal war against our people for many years. Therefore we ask for your participation, your decision to support this plan that struggles for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country that is free and democratic.

JOIN THE INSURGENT FORCES OF THE ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

General Command of the EZLN, 1993

It is a matter of interest that the frustration expressed by the rebels with their condition as a marginalized group is expressed in a collective form. Without a doubt, the presence of feelings of unfairness, exclusion and injustice are present; but how do feelings of individual frustration take a collective form? Are collective frustrations a mere sum of individual frustrations? This point has been the most criticized weakness of the RD hypotheses. Runciman, a researcher on RD has argued that this shift from individual to collective grievances can be understood through "lateral solidarity" and the normative (how things ought to be) beliefs of a group regarding its status. RD researchers have called this phenomenon "fraternal depravation" (Taylor 2002) to describe the attitude of subordinate groups toward the super-ordinate group, where the subordinate group is motivated by the desire to move upward in the structure of power, class or status, and then experiences a sense of relative deprivation or grievance (Taylor 2002).

In summary, it seems that entitlement or a group's perception of entitlements in the sense of deserving or having rights, is the pre-event before experiencing relative depravation. Since unlike individual deprivation, fraternal deprivation generates agitation aimed at structural changes, the perception of violated entitlements, unequal inter-group status, and a sense of discontent can lead in a chain of events to social protest and ultimately to collective violence.

The Limitations of the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

In spite of the important work of the RD theory in conflict analysis, it poses some questions about whether the individual's perception and perceived entitlements are strictly a psychological phenomenon beyond social and historical contexts. First, as the case of southern Mexico suggests, the creation of armed movements can follow an official violent act, such as military repression. The best example of this is the Tlatelolco repression. In

1968, students that formed part of a widely pro-democracy movement which included citizens, professors and university workers from the national university (UNAM) in Mexico City, were massacred in Tlatelolco square. The Tlatelolco massacre is probably *the* most remembered political experience of collapsing political expectations. The 1968 massacre has been repeatedly cited by founders of guerrilla groups, including the leadership of the EZLN, as the turning point from political militancy to warfare. The closing of the political structure, frustration, and bitterness seem to have led to underground armed resistance. It is not surprising, therefore, to find painted on walls throughout the country, *Tlatelolco no se olvida ¡Hasta la Victoria¡* (Tlatelolco will not be forgotten, Until victory!)

Second, there is the question of the magnitude or type of aggressive response. A violent response appears to be influenced by a type of action that blocks economic or political entitlements. A reaction to a denial of an increase in wages could be radically different than a reaction to a historical obstruction of the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, as in the case of the Zapatistas in Chiapas.

Third, Berkowitz (1965) has pointed out that aggression and force will also depend on the external elements that function as traffic lights which can stimulate and give a "green light" to violent acts. The roots of violence, consequently, are not to be found only inside individuals but in the life circumstances and the social meaning of the frustrating experiences of the individual.

The fourth point is that the trigger of violence has to be analyzed by its contextual, social, and political meaning. Violence as an abstract concept does not recognize actors but only causes, yet violent acts are carried out by actors that have motives and goals. In other words, violence must be understood in the light of social interests. If an act of violence is used to bring change, then we need to ask who benefits from that change, and who loses? (Martín-Baró 2003).

Lastly, in looking back to the first Zapatista communiqué, beyond individual perceptions, we also find the historical elements of a nation, and a broad social and political context where initial entitlements were given and then violated. Such elements fall outside of the frustration-aggression analysis. Consequently, considering these last remarks, we turn to a perspective that is more comprehensive than psychological reactions to expectations alone.

The Relevance of Resources and Power Structure

Charles Tilly (1986) has insisted on the key role of the state and *political conflict* as central to understanding revolutions, pointing out that revolutions occur within a structure of power. Tilly gives priority to aspects of collective mobilization, and suggests that to understand revolutions, we should study the groups that are contending for power, the types of claims these groups are making to the government, the capabilities of these groups to mobilize resources, (money, weapons, information, support, and mobilization), in pushing forward their demands. A revolution is possible, Tilly argues, only when a contending group has the capacity to challenge the structure of power, and the state lacks the resources to respond to the demands of the contending group or to defeat the opposition. For Tilly the mobilization of resources by contending groups is vital to understanding a revolt. In summarizing his perspective, Tilly points out that the necessary pre-conditions for a revolutionary movement are the following:

1. The appearance of contenders or coalitions of contenders, advancing exclusively alternative claims to control over the government currently exerted by the members of the polity;
2. Commitment to those claims by a significant segment of the subject population;
3. Unwillingness or incapacity of the agents of the government to suppress the alternative coalition or the commitment to its

claims;
4. Formation of coalitions between members of the polity and the making of alternative claims by contenders (Tilly 1986:53).

In other writings Tilly also affirms the importance of grievances: "grievances are fundamental to rebellion as oxygen is fundamental to combustion….although grievances are not a major cause of the presence or absence of rebellion" (Tilly 1974). These grievances or elements of discontent, according to Tilly, are normally present in politics; however, movements without organization and resources are not likely to lead to a revolutionary process. The author also points out that it is the capacity to organize and the ability to seize opportunity that enables discontent movements to achieve a revolutionary process.[20] Collective violence consequently is a by-product of situations where contenders openly set up demands and the state resists these power-contenting groups (Tilly 1986).

Tilly's opportunity approach connects the macro context with the emergence of contentious groups. At the center of the analysis are resources and opportunity. This opportunity approach suggests that the revolutionary process moves from discontent through the availability of resources and opportunity, having reasonable expectations for success and with the potential for mobilization and radical actions. These conditional steps however cannot always be calculated in advance. In spite of this, it has been argued that the success of some revolutionary groups, such as the EZLN, has been due to planning. Nevertheless, in southern Mexico, other revolutionary movements have not been predictable. For example, the social movement in the state of Guerrero transformed itself into a guerrilla movement only after being surrounded and finding no

[20] Charles Tilly's analysis has been identified by experts in the field as a "General Theory of Political Violence", a "Theory on Political Conflict" or a "Society-Centered" hypothesis to explain revolutions and is different from other hypotheses such as Skocpol 's analysis which focuses on structural causes or state-centered events to explain revolutionary events. See Theda Skocpol, *Social Revoltuions in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994) and Wickman-Crowley, *Guerrillas & Revolution in Latin America*. (New Jersey: Princenton University Press, 1992)

other alternative. As in other cases, the absence of justice, the impact of state repression, the failure of a mediating mechanism and the closed nature of the political system, created a shift from electoral opposition to armed opposition. On June 14, 1964, Lucio Cabañas, a junior high school teacher, called a meeting together with other teachers in the town of Atoyac. The purpose of the meeting was to protest against: a) the deforestation carried out by the Compañía Sivicultura Industrial S. de R.L which benefited from a government concession; b) the government's isolation of the textile cooperative "El Ticui" and the closing down of their factory; c) the abuses of authorities toward a section of the town; and d) the harassment of teachers for their political views. Due to his ideological tendencies, Cabañas lost his teaching position on the same day as the meeting. Parent and civic organizations and students began to demonstrate on behalf of the teacher, demanding his reinstallation. After a victory by the civil movement to reinstall the teacher, the people demonstrated for additional changes. Their demands were not welcomed and police opened fire against demonstrators, killing seven people, among them two policemen, and wounding dozens of others. The people of Atoyac, a town with sixty years of political intransigence, decided to demonstrate in the street, demanding justice. On May 18, 1965, Lucio Cabañas left for the mountains, following the example of his grandfather, the Zapatista Pablo Cabañas, and other men in Guerrero, such as Silvestre Castro, Alberto Téllez, Feliciano Randilla, Valente de la Cruz; and the Vidales brothers. The repression became widespread. A massacre in the city of Iguala resulted in the death of 23 people and the arrest of 280, among them civilians and political candidates of the Civil Association of Guerrero (ACG). After heated political tension, the ACG had claimed to have won the state elections. Its candidate, José María Suarez Tellez, was jailed the day after the elections. In 1964, in an organizational meeting, members of the ACG proposed "la nueva ruta" (the new route), which meant the formation of clandestine armed groups for the defense of the people. Lucio Cabañas then formed the Partido de

los Pobres—PDLP, (Party of the Poor), and dreamed of forming a national front. The political program of the PDLP can be summarized in the following points:

1. Defeating the government of the rich and wealthy
2. Installing a new regime
3. Expropriation of factories and facilities for the benefit of the workers
4. Enacting broad financial, judicial, educational and social welfare programs for the benefit of workers, women, children, Indians, and peasants
5. Breaking down the U.S. colonialism of Mexico

Lucio Cabañas and his rebels, however, lacked the resources to continue their struggle, depending instead on bank robberies and other illegal activities. Lucio Cabañas was killed by the army and his body was dragged from the sierra on December 2, 1974. Nevertheless, the struggle continued.

The Relevance of International Political and Economic Structures: Capitalism and Revolutions

Focusing on contender groups and the state's capabilities to respond to demands gives the impression that revolutions are events, and as such, predictable. Theda Skocpol in her book *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, states the following about Tilly's reasoning:

> Yet if what makes revolutionary situations special is precisely *the extraordinary nature of the goal* for which contending groups are struggling, then it naturally seems to follow that what needs to be explained about revolutions is the emergence and appeal of contenders who *intend* to achieve these special goals…the real question is when such contenders proliferate and/or mobilize (Skocpol 1994: 109).

Skocpol also points out that although Tilly rejects Gurr's hypothesis of relative deprivation and frustration in explaining revolutions, nevertheless, discontent and grievances remain an important part of Tilly's analysis. Indeed Skocpol looks beyond discontent and suggests that to understand revolutions we should first accept that revolutions and violent actions are in themselves very complex and difficult issues to explain. In general theorists face the difficulties of:

a) realizing that general theoretical propositions seem to be more appropriate in explaining simple events one-dimensionally, than revolutions, which are by nature complex and multidimensional,
b) providing explanations for revolutions in agrarian situations based on revolutions that have occurred in urban or modern settings, becomes fruitless, unless equivalent factors or alternatives are used to explain non-urban situations, and
c) understanding that theory-building as a deductive and universalizing practice makes no sense unless the investigator makes use of findings on human behavior and social processes in general, and, views the revolutionary process as a particular and specific type of phenomenon that is connected to a non-universal socio-economic structure.

Therefore, Skocpol suggests that analysis be focused on the central players of the power structure, namely the state and its limitation as an agent conditioned by economics or class structure. Yet the state's internal relationships with elites should not be reduced merely to an economic entity, and neither should the relationships between peasants and landlords, nor between states in competition

at an international level. At the international level Skocpol suggests that the following be taken into consideration:

a) the economic context of capitalism as a specific social system of production and its coexistence with various interdependent and unequal zones around the world,[21]

b) the international system of nation-states as interdependent states that interact with the economic system and remain agents that are more than purely economic institutions,

c) the vision of revolution as a *process*, not only an event, and that pressure from other nation-states and/or pressure from elites can *weaken* the state or the regime, making revolutions more likely to occur.

If rebellions have mainly occurred in rural settings as Skocpol reminds us, what is the connection between peasants and rebellions? Although the above discussed theories provide vital insights to the rebellion in southern Mexico, they leave us with other questions, such as the importance of the nature of the people that revolt. The above observations point out the undeniable relevance of the Mexican economy within the context of globalization and the political structure. The armed movements in southern Mexico have been mostly identified as peasant and/or indigenous revolutions; therefore, following Skocpol's advice we limit our analysis to the role of peasants in a rural context.

The Relevance of Actors in a Revolt: Markets, Population Growth, Dislocation, and Resistance

Wolf (1999) has been recognized as a main contributor in the field of peasantry and revolutions. Wolf suggests that revolutions are a

[21] Raúl Prebish and the ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America), were known in Latin America for their insistence on the nature of capitalist development as interdependent and unequal. The structural school also saw the diffusion of technology as unequal and consequently also unequal the fruit of that diffusion in Latin American countries that struggle for development. See Raul Prebish,. "The Latin American Periphery in the Global System Capitalism" in *Paradigms in Economic Development: Classic Perspective, Critiques, and Reflections* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe 1994).

defensive act by peasants, where participants of the revolutionary process want to protect traditional lifestyles against growing pressures. The first of these strains is *population growth*, second, *commercialization and the growth of markets, and* third, *the dislocation among the elites that function as mediators between the community and the outside world*. The first and second factors have an impact on the peasant way of life. Population growth has been associated with revolutions in the past, and it has also shown a reverse effect on ownership of the land. As population grows, land becomes scarce, and as markets increase, the land is subject to becoming a product for sale, another commodity flowing according to supply and demand. Thus, population growth combined with commercialization leads to ecological crisis and the loss of ownership of land that is usually used for subsistence purposes by peasants. Agrarian reform, coercive purchase, and over-taxed holdings have in the past caused alienation and have broken the links of ecological balance of peasants in Mexico, Algeria, and Cuba.

Finally, commercialization and ecological crisis bring about a crisis of leadership and authority. As commercialization increases, elites become powerful, and as their power increases they become more vulnerable to being co-opted by even more powerful elites. Thus, this peasant/indigenous leadership, which previously was comprised of low-key, communal leaders, becomes a commercial power-holding elite that is mostly influenced by economic interests, standing in defiance of the inherited traditional leadership in peasant society. The conciliating traditional leadership loses an important element of mediation with the external world. Peasants, however, will not rebel unless they can rely on an external resource of support and if they exercise enough tactical control over their own resources to be able to hold onto those resources for self-sustenance throughout the duration of their struggle. This tactical control can be achieved in two ways, namely, a) if peasants are “middle peasantry”, i.e., if they own or have a secure access to their land independent from the influence

of the landlord, even if the land is situated next to the landlord's property, or b) peasants own their own land and are situated on the frontier, i.e., outside the landlords' dominion and next to the urban world.

In consequence, the possibility of a rebellion based on this tactical control is doubled if the community is found outside of the normal control of the state, tripled if mountains are located next to the focus of rebellion, and quadrupled if the peasant society contains a distinct culture or language. A native language unifies and facilities communication among communities beyond the official language and the media. The importance of location is due to the fact that in being on the frontier between two worlds and experiencing strains from the economic system, the community's resistance to change converts passive individuals into revolutionary peasants. Part of the attraction to revolts by peasantry is that the revolutionary discourse contains a utopian idea of freedom for the community, freedom from state pressure and freedom from whatever is being perceived as a real threat. The relationship between peasants and revolutions still remains a debate. For example, while Wolf's analysis favors *location* as a guide to identify which peasants could become revolutionaries, other experts, such as Jeffery Paige in *Revolutions: Social Movements and Export Agriculture* argue that the social seed of revolutionary movements are the peasants that derive their income from *wages* rather than from the land, depending on the landholding class.[22] The relationship between peasants and revolutions still remains a debate. For example Wolf's analysis favors *location* as a guide to identify which peasants could become revolutionaries. Other experts, such as Jeffery Paige in *Revolutions: Social Movements and Export Agriculture*, argue that the social seed of revolutionary movements are the peasants that

[22] See Jeffery M. Paige *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York: The Free Press, 1975).

derive their income from *wages* rather than from the land, depending on the landholding class.[23]

In this ongoing fructiferous discussion it is vital to mention the Scott-Popkin debate. James Scott in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (1976) set forward his thesis that Asian peasants of the 1930's, in confronting the transformation of their world which was influenced by the market economy, were aware that their existence lie at the edge of scarcity. Consequently, the goal of peasants was not to overthrow a system of domination but *to survive*, and for this reason peasants avoided risks that threatened their basic subsistence and worked the system to "their minimum disadvantage". Scott further stipulated that peasants tend to be committed to a *moral economy* manifested in the two principles which shape interpersonal relations: the principle of *reciprocity* and the right to *subsistence*. Therefore peasants resist domination and rebel on moral grounds.

The counterargument to Scott's thesis was advanced by Samuel Popkin in *The Rational Peasant* (1979), in which he was convinced of the existence of an even more powerful reason for peasant behavior in Asian agrarian societies. Peasants, according to Popkin act upon self-interest. The "rational peasant" tends, in any given situation, to act (including joining or supporting a rebellion) to improve the peasant's individual wellbeing or the wellbeing of his family or at least to preserve those benefits currently held. From this perspective peasants do not engage in trading relationships guided by moral principles, but for their own benefit. Similarly, collective action is not seen in the light of moral predicaments but based on aggregated self-interest. Contrary to Scott's observation of the negative effects of the market economy and the colonial state, in Popkin's analysis markets are seen as beneficial, bringing investment opportunities and a maximization of benefits to peasants who always act rationally and participate in the markets even though they find themselves at the edge of

[23] See Jeffery M. Paige *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York: The Free Press, 1975).

scarcity. In this sense Popkin's thesis appears to be closely related to the neo-classical understanding of fair, self-regulating markets and progressive development. Salemink (2004) has pointed out the relevance of the Scott-Popkin controversy, (also known as *the moral versus political economy* debate), for its impact on development studies and for the way this debate has permeated social science research with its paradigmatic ramifications.[24] We shall return to this issue in Chapter V.

Although these debates and their ramifications could help us deepen our analysis we postpone this task for later chapters, continuing here with the identification of elements that concern the relationship between market growth, alienation of peasants from resources, and conflict escalation.

For now it is important to make two remarks. First, analysts have been pointing out the association between an increasing crisis and policies that favor the markets, in the most ecologically diverse region of Mexico.[25] Economic policies in southern Mexico, although recognized as productive strategies, have in fact caused permanent damage to the environment. Unfortunately, many of these programs produce services for a small percentage of the population, responding to the desires of the privileged and thus reinforcing the already existing inequalities. Ecologist Alejandro Toledo (1988) has pointed out that governmental programs and private projects are executed without taking into account the intrinsic value of the environment. It is as if the demand for resources from the market, in demanding the extraction of a single resource, must necessarily maintain a very narrow focus, without considering the effects of that extraction on the overall, extremely

[24] Beyond an analysis of the Scott-Popkin debate itself, or an analysis of its possible historical and economic limitations (since both reports were carried out within the specific context of the great depression in the 1930's), Salemink has suggested an analysis of the debate in connection to the socio-political context in which both research reports originated. Salemink argues that both theories were, to an extent influenced by a particular type of *social science research* which was sponsored and promoted by the U.S. Government within the context of military intervention and analysis of insurgency in Vietnam and other developing countries.

[25] Southern Mexico contains the main reserve of water in Mexico, the most important tropical rainforest, the most complex biodiversity and ethnic diversity. Chiapas also contains the most important national reserves of oil, gas, and minerals.

complex ecological system. This focus has resulted in the assumption that the ecological system of a region can be valued in terms of the existence of a single resource, dismissing collateral resources as non-productive and valueless. Toledo has also pointed out that in the decades of 1950 to 1980, federal economic policies in southern Mexico aimed to solve problems created by: a) an excessive demographic and economic centralization, b) the unbalanced and unequal distribution of economic benefits throughout the region, c) the profound inequalities within the urban areas, and d) the lack of integration of these urban centers with the rural areas that surround them. Consequently, the coastal areas of southern Mexico became the targets for agro-industrial/urban-industrial programs combined with large infrastructure projects. The long-run expectations were to exploit to the maximum the potential of resources in the region. Through massive investment, an export-oriented industry was put in place in the region to extract minerals and oil. This ecological scenario has evolved into major conflicts of interests between governmental economic policies and indigenous communities. Indeed, the Zapatista uprising has been explained as having its roots in the pressure from population growth and the loss of land.

Second, Wolf's analysis correctly assumes that a violent revolt can occur in the form of a *defense*. In fact, resistance or defense of a culture or a way of living has been the most common characteristic of the indigenous discourse. Indigenous and peasant groups have dedicated scarce community resources to this cause. This defense or resistance has not been limited to culture or a way of living but has included *abstract* elements such as identity, dignity, self-determination, autonomy, democracy, etc. These concepts have been placed at the center of their discourse, as can be appreciated in the declaration of Ramona, a Zapatista commander, in an excerpt from a letter sent to the "500 Years of Resistance Indian Council" in 1994.

> We talked among ourselves, we looked within ourselves and we saw our history: we saw that not everything had been

> taken from us, that we had that which was most valuable, that which enabled us to live, that which lifted our step above plants and animals, that which made the stone to be under our feet, and we saw, brothers and sisters, that it was Dignity, which was all we had, and we saw that great was our shame at having forgotten it, and we saw that Dignity was good so that mankind would once again be mankind, and Dignity returned to dwell in our heart. . . (Giménez 2000).
> …on January 1st, 1994, we shouted, "Enough!" And from that moment Mexican Indians do not bend our heads down anymore, we look straight to power and now it is power that bends his head down because we have dignity. . . for the powerful, a dead Indian is better than a live one …Mexican Indians know how to resist….we will not allow human sacrifices to continue to be carried out by this power. We want to build a country with all of you (UNAM 1997).

In a way these non-material demands represent a challenge to our way of understanding the Chiapas revolt. The following pages study the relationship between ethnicity and conflict using the analysis provided by the Identity Theory as presented by Tajfel and the French school of social psychology.

The Relevance of Identity: The Contact Theory

To better appreciate the work of Tajfel and the contributions of the identity theory, it is necessary to briefly review some of the dominant ideas on ethnic conflicts. Gordon Allport (1954) was a professor of psychology at Harvard University from 1930 to 1967, and is probably best known by his systematization of the "contact theory". This theory has been the basis for different initiatives on desegregation in the United States; e.g., the school busing system. This theory and its hypothesis, also known as the "Allport-Pettigrew contact hypothesis" (Forbes 1997), explain conflict by the nature of contact. According to this perspective, increased

contact between antagonistic ethnic groups tends to reduce negative stereotypes, thus improving relations. Regarding the subject Allport affirms that:

> Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of a common goal. This can be greatly enhanced if the contact is sanctioned by institutional support, i.e., by law, customs or local atmosphere, and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups" (Forbes 1997: 22).

Besides this main hypothesis, others, such as Thomas Pettigrew, a disciple of Allport, have contributed to the hypotheses pointing out that contact can go in either direction. It can contribute to an increasing or diminishing of hostilities depending on the conditions and the situation in which the contact occurs.

> Prejudice is lessened when the two groups a) possess equal status, b) seek common goals, c) are cooperatively dependent upon each other, and c) interact with the positive support of authorities, laws, or customs" (p. 275).

The contributions of Allport and Pettigrew are generally accepted premises in the United States, where experiments and laws have been executed under the assumption of the contact theory. Nevertheless, the restrictions of the theory and its dependency upon the stipulated conditions raise further questions. Social theorists wonder whether inter-group contact can reduce prejudice or whether it is reduced by other factors, such as the types of contacts, the kinds of representatives from the disliked group, proximity, favorable contact, and common goals among groups (Cook 1962).

Other socio-psychological theories offer a different view on the existence of prejudice and hostilities that have challenged the contact theory. For instance, Deutsch and Sherif have argued that ethnic conflicts are explained by the *real interest* involved in the dispute. The economic or political motives behind prejudice play an important role. If certain groups benefit from a current status of discrimination or oppression it is understood that these groups will not be interested in changing the situation. The dispute therefore, at its core is about *economic gains*. The realistic conflict theory asserts that if someone has been a subject of discrimination, she/he more likely suffers from economic discrimination while others benefit from it. The question remains whether it is the material or economic disputes, or rather *the circumstances* in which the Indians and peasants have lived which are key to the conflict.

The Relevance of the Connection between Social Identity and Conflict

Based on group observations, Tajfel (1982) argues that materialistic reasons are not sufficient or necessary for ethnic conflicts to erupt. Beyond competition for economic gains, non-material gains seemed to play a key role in conflicts. The desire for a positive social group identity can be a source of conflict during the process of inter-group identification. If an individual asks herself/himself "Who am I?" instead of "How do I feel about others?" the process of self-categorization and identification has begun and the necessary conditions for a conflict are given. An explanation for this is that the process of identification with a group triggers a process of social comparison and competitive behavior among groups. Consequently, the struggle can be rooted in the desire to achieve a positive social identity. In other words, issues of self-esteem appear to be a motive for conflict. The struggle can take the form of a demand for respect, dignity, rights, identity and other non-material interests, as we can see in the case of Chiapas.

The Social Identity School offers additional findings. The individual's identity is formed of two components: the personal identity, which consists of the uniqueness of the individual, and a social identity, or the group identification that the individual chooses. Depending on the choice made, the reaction to unfair experiences can be demonstrated either in individualistic protest or collective demonstration. The individual, therefore, holds this double and simultaneous identity and makes the decision of to what extent she/he will identify with the group. Among the numerous reasons for an individual to identify herself/himself with one group or another, we find the way in which individuals see themselves in their context, their cultural past and present, their lack of opportunities, physical or ideological similarities, and aspirations. Nevertheless, an objection can be made that although this process is based on observations, it would seem more logical that the individual rebel individually, not collectively.

In order to respond collectively, social-identity researchers argue that perceptions held by disadvantaged groups concerning the inter-group relationship is decisive. If the perception of the disadvantaged group is that the inter-group boundaries are permeable then individuals will tend to react individually. If the perception is that boundaries are closed, the reaction is more likely to be a collective one. S. C. Wright (2002) in his research on reactions of "doing nothing" about injustice individually or collectively, has found that closed boundaries established and preserved by a privileged group are associated with a high likelihood of collective protest from the disadvantaged group.

Consequently, subjective sources of conflicts are less likely to occur when groups resemble each other and contain lower barriers to social mobility. On the other hand, lower barriers can allow members of a group to see themselves as individuals entering and leaving social-economic roles, and as such they would prefer individual interactions rather than group contact (Forbes 1997). A second variable identified by the Social Identity School is whether the disadvantaged group perceives that its position can

change; in other words, if the inter-group relationship is stable or unstable. Perceptions of instability were found to be favorable for disadvantaged and deprived groups to compete directly (violently or non-violently) and collectively with the dominant group. Third, a collective response also seems to depend on the perception of whether the inter-group relationship is legitimated or not. Assessment of the legitimacy of the relationship seems to precede feelings of collective response. Other findings also reveal that if the relationship between groups is perceived as legitimated, other variables such as inequality may be considered irrelevant (Major 1994, Ellemers 1993). Conversely, if the difference in status of groups is considered illegitimate, social comparisons are triggered and alternative ways to seek change will increase (Ellmers 1993). In summary, a disadvantaged group is more likely to engage in violent or non-violent direct competition with a privileged group if the perception is that the relation of power is illegitimate, unstable and closed. Nevertheless, what underlies a conflict is the suppression of a minority group that has been ignored, or discriminated against by the dominant groups and the state (Giménez 2000).

The Latent Conflict

By way of conclusion, we can say first that conflicts arise for more complex and dynamic reasons than what appears at a cursory glance. They bear multidimensional facets that may include expectations of individuals, the social placement of different groups, issues of identity, etc. In other words, these facets extend beyond the area of economics, the area usually implied when a connection is made between rebellion and poverty, into the areas of society, polity, and culture. Second, we argue here that the many reasons for conflict here presented can be part of a single process. This single yet multi-faceted process can be referred to as a "latent-open conflict" (See Model 4). To say that there is an existing latent-open conflict implies, in the case of Southern

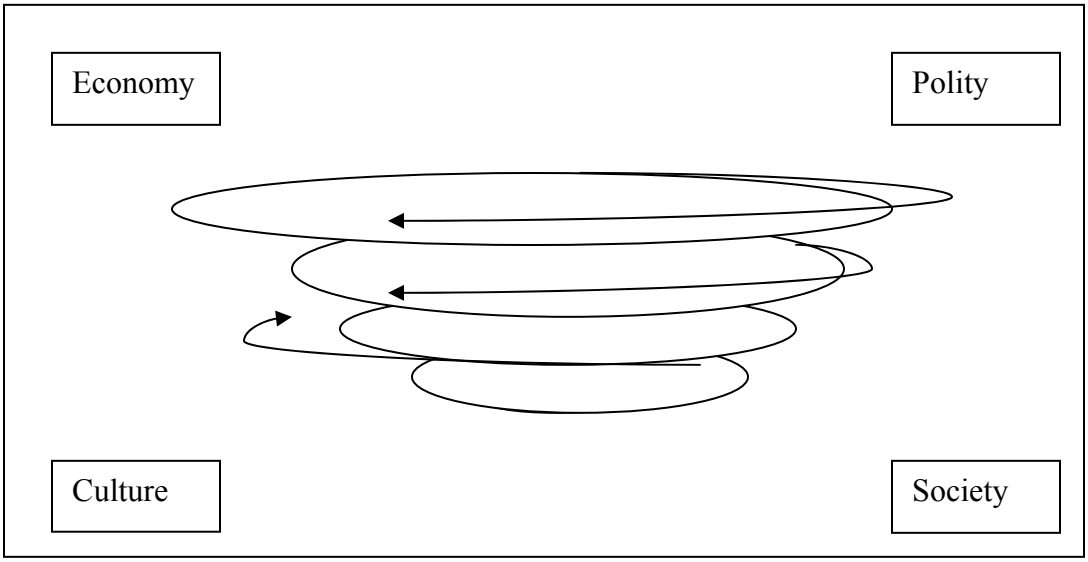
Mexico, that the reoccurring cyclical appearances of armed groups represent a clear manifestation of a deeper social symptom. As this multi-faceted process continues, it spirals into higher stages of open conflict. Marx introduced his contribution of dialectical conflictive social processes to explain the emergence of capitalism from feudalism, and its potential collapse to give place to new forms. His contribution can help us to more clearly understand a process where social contradictions coincide with *conflicts of interest* and can eventually be followed by *conflict of actions* and *violent confrontations*.

In Model 4, a spiraling conflict is rooted in the society, culture, economy, and polity. Although arrangements within the society may continue to function, the latent conflict grows out of a context of poverty, potentially taking the form of: a) relative deprivation (Gurr's model), b) discontent (Tilly'model), c) a crisis among peasants (Wolf's model), or d) suppression of identity and systemic discrimination (Identity School).

It seems apparent in the case of Mexico some armed groups, both past and present, were at one point civilian movements that aspired to representation in the political arena. At the beginning stage of the spiral, the closed nature of the system does not tolerate civilian opposition, evidenced by the use of repression which then functions as the springboard to an increase in the formation of new armed groups, (e.g., the Tlatelolco Massacre in 1968). This sequence, (political opposition-repression-armed opposition), is one of growing escalation. It is interesting to note that the communiqués from newly-formed armed groups are very consistent in pointing out the legitimacy of their existence due to massacres, the irremediable social contradictions (depravation, exclusion, poverty, human rights violations, impunity, etc.,) and the impossibility of their participation in the system to bring about real change through official means. However, since the state's use of force to stop armed groups focuses on the achievement of "social order" at all costs, it fails to re-direct efforts to solve

grievances by correcting the underlying injustices present in early stages of the latent conflict.

Model 4 The Spiral of Latent-Open Conflict Process



As the violent confrontations escalate, they tend to be accompanied by even higher levels of human rights violations. Consequently, persecuted political fronts that perceive they have no future in the political arena may develop into armed fronts. The increasing appearances of armed groups in Mexico, including the Zapatista front, can be placed along this latent-open conflict cycle.

Consistent with the *actors-oriented* approach and our definition of conflicts as dynamic *processes* that lead to rebellions, we propose the use of a matrix constructed by De Gaay Fortman (2002) to visualize the complexity of the root conflict (see Model 5). In his matrix, De Gaay Fortman explores the nature and manifestations of conflicts that can escalate to violent rebellion, emphasizing that the matrix must be read in a dynamic way. The discussion on the relevance of the matrix in the case of the Zapatista rebellion is taken up in the following chapter.

Model 5 The Root Conflict

Conflict and its Roots in:	Perceived	Incompatibility of (Lack of) mediating mechanisms	Interest
Society	Socially open or closed Role of Ideology Collective prejudice	Pluralism Power-sharing Quality of group leadership Social mobility Protection of minorities	Group recognition & Group rights (minority rights) Collective equality (no systemic discrimination)
Culture	Freedom of expression Ways of voicing dissent and criticism Role of the media	Freedom of worship Fundamentalism vs. tolerance Multi-Culturalism Quality of religious leadership	Cultural identities Religious convictions Voice
Polity	Do people feel they own the state or that the state owns them? Is this likely to change? Legitimacy	Social contract Democracy Quality of political leadership Rule of law A fair and functioning legal system	Access to political and public goods Citizenship and political rights Legal protection
Economy	Trends and expectations in economic growth and income distribution	Employment Poverty and vulnerability Empowerment rights Scope for collective action (from resistance to reform) Land reform Development	Income and wealth (distribution) Pressure on and access to resources Economic, social and cultural rights Entitlement system and social protection

Further Considerations

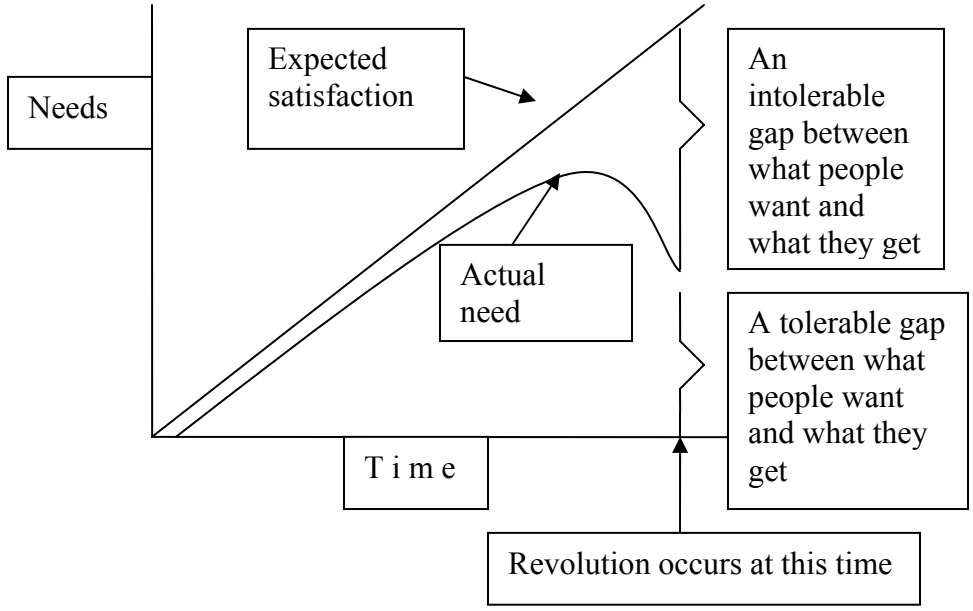
The contributions presented here remain vital to our understanding of conflicts in general. The case of southern Mexico, however, demands the inclusion of other elements present in the region. The following observations are worthy of consideration for further discussion.

1. In a situation of colonialism, the use of violence by the dominated group to achieve liberation, self-esteem, to protect identity or to simply be heard, could not be necessarily the primary source of violence (Freire 1971), but a response to an initial violence established by the dominating group as it finds in the use of violence an effective tool to achieve goals (Martin-Baró).
2. The roots of violence are connected and often highly influenced by external conditions beyond individuals' internal perceptions.
3. The use of violence as a tool to achieve goals is rooted in political, economic and social structures of power, and its nature needs to be explained in its context. The conflict cannot be solved by declaring peace, bringing international observers, new elections or international intervention without dealing with the root causes that originated the conflict (Galtung, 1996).
4. Finally, there is a need to distinguish between types of aggression, as suggested by Fromm (1975). There is first, the kind of violence used to open up space to be heard, such as the kind used by the Zapatistas for a few days in 1994. This violence was aimed at responding to the excessive abuses and killings, and can be labeled "defensive aggression". Fromm suggests that this kind of violence is used for survival purposes, and stops when the threat is no longer present. Another type of aggression is the "evil aggression" that appears in specific social circumstances, and provides

benefits or produces pleasure for the aggressor. This latter type of aggression uses fear, torture and killing as a means to maintain dominance and control, keeping other groups in submission.

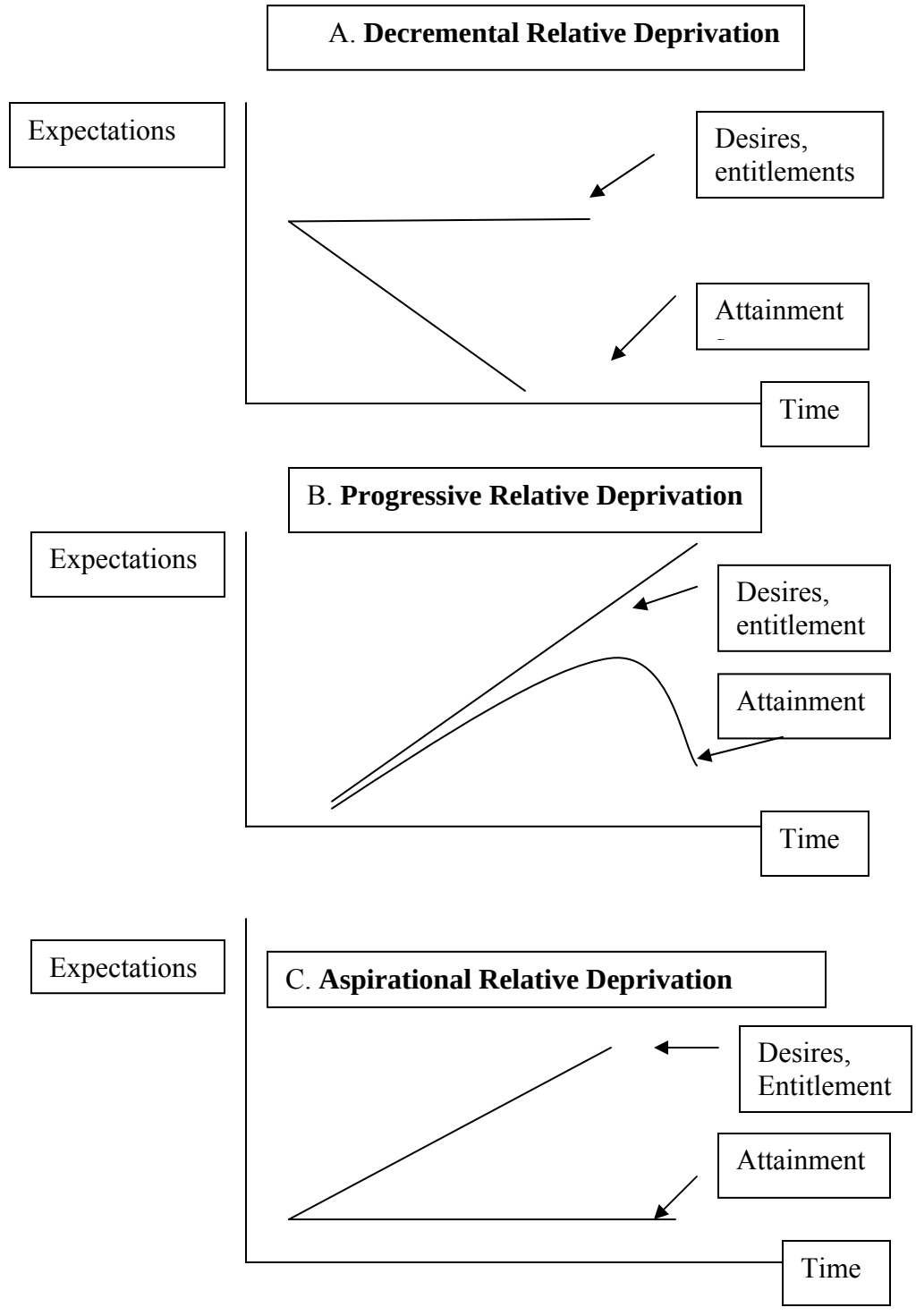
APPENDIX

Model 1 Satisfaction and Revolution


Needs
Expected satisfaction
An intolerable gap between what people want and what they get
Actual need
A tolerable gap between what people want and what they get
T i m e
Revolution occurs at this time

Source: Ivo K. Feierabend Engewood Cliffs, eds. "Toward a Theory of Revolution" in *Anger, Violence and Politics: Theories and Research* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

Box 3 Three Patterns of Relative Deprivation



Source: T. R. Gurr *Why Men Rebel*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1970)

Chapter III

The Latent Conflict and the Zapatista Rebellion

The issues presented in our list of further considerations at the end of Chapter II can be, without a doubt, issues for further research and debate. The first part of this chapter explores the first of these considerations in greater depth. Two elements dominate the first of these considerations--the issue of colonialism and the topic of the primary source of violence and its use. Leaving for the moment the topic of the source of violence pending, we begin with the issue of colonialism; arguing that the role of colonialism in the dynamics of rebellions was not taken into account by the studies presented in Chapter II. Consequently, we include here the dehumanizing repercussions of colonialism, reviewing the case of previous Indian rebellions to argue the fundamental relevance of a history of colonialism as part of the latent conflict-open conflict process.

We have contented in the previous chapter that conflict is rooted in culture, society, polity and the economy. The second part of this chapter favors culture as a key factor in explaining rebellions in Mexico. To lay the groundwork for our discussion we must first define our understanding of culture. Following the work of Bakhtin, we argue that culture is grounded in the *practice of agents* within; a) a space of *authoring* as a response to the continually changing economic and social context. Given that the changing world must be faced and responded to, reacting and responding to new circumstances (authorship) is consequently not an option[26], and b) a historical and social context linked to economic resources, entitlements, power structures, and values such as respect and dignity.

The main thesis defended in this chapter is that the contemporary rebellion in Chiapas is part of an ongoing, continuous, latent/open conflict with roots extending back to the colonial period. The ongoing conflict has emerged as an open confrontation from time to time, in a context of unbearable levels

[26] Bakhtin, Mikhail M ed. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press 1981); quoted in Holland, Dorothy Lachicotte William, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2001).

of humiliation, exploitation and exclusion involving issues of identity and dignity. To sustain our thesis, four sporadic cases of rebellion are studied in part (A) of the chapter with a brief analysis of each context. We note that rebellion can be translated into a struggle to restore religious, economic, and socio-political arrangements which are rooted in local culture and identity. This restoration, however, pre-supposes the recovery of autonomy in order to achieve restoration. Consequently we also look into the struggle for autonomy, recognition, and restitution--common themes which tend to reappear in rebellions in the region. The Zapatista rebellion included in part (B) of this chapter illustrates the most recent case in Chiapas of cultural revitalization or response to hostile changes imposed on Mayan culture. This has taken the form of political mobilization and the involvement of other actors in defying imposed economic and political arrangements which have led to a culture of dehumanization. In other words, we argue that the Zapatista uprising can be understood as a contemporary response, (an act of authorship), a pulling of the brake on the changes which threaten key local economic and political arrangements. These arrangements have historically permitted the carrying out of productive and dignifying activities.

A. Rebellion as a Response to the Imposition of New Economic and Political Arrangements

The Zapatista Rebellion was not the first uprising in reaction to imposed economic arrangements. The history of Chiapas offers multiple evidence of this. The Chiapanecos[27] from Chiapa de los

[27]Though most of the current state of Chiapas was inhabited in precolumbian times by Mayan Indians who were distinguished by their spoken languages, (the Zoque, Tzotzil, and Chol people came from the jungle, the Mames from the Gulf Coast, as well as Tzeltales and Tojolabales). The true identiy of the *Chiapaneco People* is unknown, nevertheless Chiapa de los Indios ranked as the wealthiest, oldest, and most important town in the region in colonial times. The only other town that could compete in size and importance was the Spanish town known as Chiapa de los Españoles. See Jan de Vos, "The Battle of Sumidero: A History of the Chiapanecan Rebellion through Spanish and Indian Testimonies (1524-34)" in Kevin Gosner and

Indios (currently called Chiapa de Corzo) confronted the first conquistadors led by Luis Marin in 1524 who had been sent by Hernán Cortez to pacify the rebellion of those who resisted the economic and political system imposed by the crown, refusing to pay tributes.[28] The Chiapaneco people represented the strongest and most organized group in Chiapas by the 1530s[29], and in 1532 the Chiapaneco population rose up in arms against the Spaniards. However, in spite of resisting and confronting the repressive military troops sent to subjugate them, the Chiapaneco people were defeated. Chiapanecos were taken back to their village, which later became an *encomienda* under Baltazar Guerra, a young captain who was a newcomer from Spain. *This new type of economy, which was based on the imposition of the encomienda and the practice of extraction of resources, demanded labor.*[30] Lacking the labor to exploit the mines discovered in the area, Guerra, similar to many other "encomenderos", organized the indigenous population in groups of 200 and forced them to work in the mines. This subjugation, however, did not occur without resistance and rebellion.[31] The Chiapaneco Indians were defeated and brought under Spanish rule within ten years after the Viceroyalty of Spain was established in Mexico.[32]

Arij Ouweneel eds. *Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas and Andean Highlands.* (Amsterdam: The Center for Latin American Research (CEDLA), 1996)

[28] Historians Jan de Vos (1999), Flores Ruiz (1973), and Pineda Vicente (1888), and Bernal Diaz del Castillo (1965).

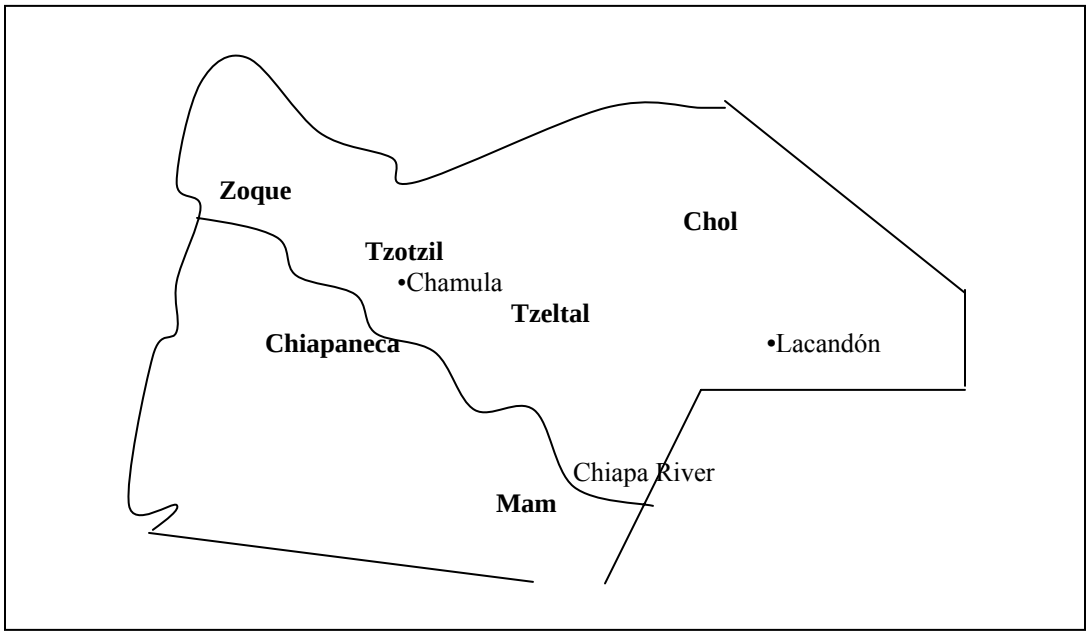
[29] See a short study on rebellions in Chiapas Jan De Vos, "Tierra y libertad: panorama de cuatro rebeliones indígenas en Chiapas". En *Rebeliones Indígenas en Chiapas*. San Cristóbal de Las Casas Ediciones Pirata., Mexico, 2002)

[30] The *encomienda* system was established throughout Mexico. A Spanish soldier would be given land and indigenous communities to administer, thus forming an encomienda. It was jointly a political, religious and economic system, and had four goals: to honor the conquistadors for their service to the Crown, to incorporate indigenous peoples into the economy; to convert them to Christianity without cost to the Spanish Crown, and to fortify the military strength of Spain in the Americas.

[31] According to historical records, a year later after this event, a man named Sanguieme and 120 other Chiapanecos rebelled against Spanish rulers and left their village. Together with others, they formed a new community and broke off relations with other Chiapanecos that remained submitted to the Spanish crown. The rebels were persecuted and hid in a religious sanctuary. Later, vastly outnumbered and surrounded by Spanish soldiers, civilians and cooperating, submissive Chiapaneco Indians, they were forced to surrender. The rebels were publicly executed in the main square, and no further rebellions were recorded in the history of Chiapas by the Chiapaneco people. On the contrary, an increasing number of Chiapaneco Indians worked hand in hand with Spaniards to locate and dominate other peoples, such as the Lacandon Indians.

[32] Hernán Cortez, the Spanish conquistador, landed in Veracruz in 1519. He was seen by the indigenous

Map 1 Territorial Division of Chiapas during the Conquest Era



Source: Jan de Vos, "The Battle of Sumidero: A History of the Chiapanecan Rebellion Through Spanish and Indian Testimonies (1524-34)" in Kevin Gosner and Arij Ouweneel eds. *Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas and Andean Highlands.* (Amsterdam: The Center for Latin American Research (CEDLA), 1999)

The Lacandon Resistance to Economic and Political Domination

In 1530, a new rebellion began that would last more than 150 years (1530-1695), the Lacandon rebellion.[33] 1530 is the first recorded year when Lacandon Indians were spotted by Spanish soldiers. Then, again in 1536, Spanish soldiers had another incursion into the jungle; this time in search of a town near Lacandon territory, and to explore the Pochutla Indian region. In 1559 Spaniards attacked the Lacandons and Pochutlas. Some were killed and others taken prisoner. By 1563 the Pochutla Indians that still remained in their territory were Christianized by Fray Pedro

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population as fulfilling the prophesy of the return of Quetzalcoaltl, the Feathered Serpent of the Mexica calendar. The conquest of Tenochtitlán, the great Aztec city, took only one year.

[33] Lacandon comes from the word lacam-tun or big stone, a name given to the island that lay at the center of the lake where this people lived. The Lacandon People belonged to the Mayan people from the rainforest who spoke Chol.

Lorenzo and were removed to another town, Oconsingo. The Lacandons, however, continued in rebellion. After returning from exile, surviving members and others that had escaped, rebuilt their villages. The Lacandons founded another village in an area unknown to the Spaniards. The Lacandons built a new village (Zec-Balum or White Tiger). The new village existed for one hundred years in a hidden location. In 1695, three simultaneous military incursions were organized with three objectives: first, to bring under control new unexplored territory, second, to establish a military and commercial route between Guatemala and the Gulf of Mexico, and third to conquer the Lacandon and the Itzées Indians, inhabitants of the region. Zac-Balum was occupied by the military that year, as the Lacandon Indians surrended without any resistance. Their village was established as a mission and a military base consisting of three priests and thirty soldiers. The Lancandon Indians were "Christianized" and incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church and the colonial system. Suffering from diseases previously unknown to the Lacandons, part of the population died, while others were taken to reservations near the border of Guatemala and then later to a city known as Retalhuleu. At this location, the last members of the Lacandon Indians died in the 1750's.

Some remarks and observations can be made at this point regarding these early rebellions.[34] First, *these rebellions followed the imposition of Spanish economic and political structure, extending beyond the initial conquest period and occurring in Chiapas in a context of extreme violence and plunder. In part this imposition resulted in an exclusion of the indigenous population as legitimated right bearers and agents entitled to their territory.* For instance, in 1493 Pope Alexander VI promulgated the Alexandrian Bulls, which gave divine right to the crown of Castile to dominate

[34] These rebellions are the first two of the four discussed in this paper. The other two are included in Chapter V which covers the 1994 rebellion.

and possess the land of the New World.[35] Second, although the Church played the role of introducing Christianity to the Americas, it also worked with the army to expand the economic and political interests of the crown, recommending force and legitimizing the conquest and denying religious freedom to the dominated collective religious entities. To further appreciate these two points and their resulting complexity, we mention the case of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and his perception of the dominated territory. As a priest Bartolomé de las Casas was an exception to the rule, becoming known as the defender and protector of the Indians. In his work, *Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, he described the horror and violence that Indians suffered at the hands of Spaniards.[36]

De las Casas came to Chiapas in the 1530's, when Chiapas was still known as the kingdom of Guatemala, and he was convinced that Mayans could be converted peacefully. In 1547 Las Casas had hopes of reducing abuse and violence, and persuaded the Crown to pass new laws for the Indies to reform the *encomienda* system. This created many enemies for him and consequently he had to flee for his life back to Spain. The new laws gained the approval of the crown and slavery was officially abolished; however, Weinberg points out that as debt labor and feudalism became entrenched, the official abolition of Indian

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[35] The church played a hegemonic role in European feudalism. Pope Rodrigo de Borga, known as Alexander VI, promulgated the *bulls* that take their name after him. These documents, especially the *Bula iner coetera, nove univers*i, declared the Spanish Crown of Castile the legitimate owner of the "New World". Later the *Exime devotionis* and *Dudum siquidem* bulls, issued in September of the same year, gave the right and the responsibility to the Crown to Christianize the natives. See Durand Alcántara, *Derecho Nacional, Derechos Indios y Derecho Cosuetudinario Indígena: Los triquis un Estudio del Caso.*(Mexico City: UNP and UAM, 1998)

[36] For instance, he relates the story of Hatuey an Indian Chief that opposed the Spanish invasion. Hatuey was captured and sentenced by Governor Diego Velázquez to be burned alive. Though Las Casas intervened on Hatuey's behalf, he was overruled by the governor. Nevertheless, Las Casas had one consolation: Hatuey's death gave him vivid material for his exposé of Spanish cruelty toward the Indians. In describing Hatuey's death, Las Casas wrote that Hatuey was given a chance to embrace Christianity before being burned, so that his soul might go to heaven. The condemned chief asked if he would find the white man there. Told he would, he made this poignant reply: "Then I will not be a Christian, for I would not again go to a place where I must find men so cruel!" in Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account* (New York.Seabury Press, 1974)

slavery did little to alter the actual condition of the Indians. Additionally, the new laws established a policy of *reducciones* – "reducing" Indian lands by centralizing the Indians in hamlets clustered around churches. The oligarchs quickly appropriated the lands which had been reduced (2000: 21).

These new laws promoted the reduction of Indian lands to *ejidos* or "exits"--small plots of land located on the outskirts of the towns. The ejido system was the surviving remnant of the *capulli* structure. As in the rest of Mesoamerica, the *capulli* was the oldest unit of economic and political structure (Durand 1998, Alonso 1947).[37] The *capulli* socio-political structure was lost and later replaced by other agrarian laws stemming from a legal system *which nevertheless remained foreign to the indigenous population, as they had no concept of ownership of the land. Slowly, decisions over their daily social and economic activities were taken away by foreigners and their descendants, who acted in accordance with their own interests*. The role of the church was geared to restructuring society with the building of *criollo*[38] economic and political centers. Other social structures in communities were co-opted and certain leaders emerged as village patriarchs or *caciques*. The caciques received land (ejidos) to produce food, labor, and agricultural products for the new Spanish centers. The separation of Indian populations from their land was accompanied by ecological degradation, As Winberg has pointed out:

> By the eighteen century, Indian pauperization and ecological degradation escalated as ever more *ejidal* land came under control of the oligarchy's cattle ranchers. As cattle grazed in the fertile valleys, Mayan *milpas* (corn fields) were forced

[37] Durand and Alonso explain the importance of the c*apulli* as a socio-political institution. The c*apulli* land was divided into small plots of land according to the number of families that lived in the area. A "parcela" (parcel) of land was given to each head of a family. The parcela could not be sold, traded or transferred to families in other regions. It could be worked for life by the family and given to the descendants of the family. This land had to be worked in person by the owner, if in condition to do so. Land could not be accumulated. Zurita, Alonso de, *Breve relación de los señores de la nueva España* (Mexico City: Ediciones Chavez, 1947)

[38] The term *criollo* refers to the descendants of Spaniards who were born in the Americas.

> onto the rocky mountainsides, displacing the forests. The soil eroded, gullies opened and streams dried up (2000).

Remarkably, the alienation from the land experienced by indigenous peoples in Chiapas would become a linking factor in the continuing Mayan rebellions throughout the following 500 years.[39]

Finally, during this colonial period, mining occupied first place as an economic activity. Mining, however, required labor and the agricultural products to maintain the Indians who were extracting metals (Dietz 1995). Similar to the Lacandon Indian population, native populations throughout the continent[40] declined dramatically as a consequence of killings, abuses and contact with European diseases for which the Indians had no immunological defenses.[41] To put the case of the Lacandon Indians in a broader context, Table 6 in the appendix presents three hypotheses regarding the existing indigenous population of 1492, which have been set forth by the main experts in the field. The table also shows a possible scenario of the declining population during this period.

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[39] The concept of ethnicity is understood as a social process. According to Oommen (1997), ethnicity is a product of a "process of ethnization" that began with exploration and navigation in the XVI century and has expanded its consequences to present times. This process was fostered by colonialism, European expansion, international immigration, U.S expansion and cultural homogenization. The process was characterized by the separation of ethnies (previously autonomous with a territory and living in agreement with their world views and culture) from their space, land or territory. As indigenous peoples were separated from their territory, they became dispensable component of society, alienated, marginalized and labeled as strange, even within their own county. In the case of Mexico specifically, the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas and the following conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortes marked the beginning of the process of ethnicity, accompanied by a dramatic decrease in the population of indigenous people as the process of colonization continued.

[40] The predominant geographic concept taught in schools in Latin America and Europe is that North, Central and South America together form one American continent, unlike the concept in the United States where North and South America are seen as two separate continents and Central America is seen as not truly a part of either.

[41] With the process of declining population, known in the indigenous discourse as ethnocide, the accumulated knowledge of generations was also lost. For instance, Enrique Left (1998), a well-respected Mexican political ecologist, argues that the physical aspect of the ecological crisis and underdevelopment in countries such as Mexico, is found in that countries lost, in addition to people and their culture, the potential resources and wisdom to developed adequate economic as well socio-political structures in accordance with the environment, i.e., sustainable economic structures.

The Loss of Autonomy and a Religious Rebellion against an Economy of Extraction

As the Lacandon Indians were disappearing in Chiapas, a new rebellion was about to begin in the Zendales province. In 1712 a general indigenous uprising was organized in Chiapas against colonial Spanish and ladino[42] abuses as well as the church tax system. The socio-economic conditions surrounding this rebellion were reported by Juan Pedro Viqueira in 1995.[43] Between 1670 and 1707 the kingdom of Guatemala experienced a period of prosperity. Commerce increased and the amount of silver sent to Spain during this period reached its highest level in twenty years. Also, 1670 marked the beginning of a continuous recovery of population growth.[44]

For the Spanish rule, population growth meant high economic expectations, since the economy relied mostly on Indian labor and trade. Their response, however, was also of concern, for an increasing population could mean that they were not paying enough to the Crown; therefore, authorities increased the tax contributions of Indians. Taxes were paid to the encomenderos, to the church or to royal citizens. A new tax system was imposed and Indians had to pay duties on products at market prices. It is known that at least until 1692, the lieutenants of royal revenue, and later the district magistrates, continued the practice of reporting the

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[42] The term "ladino" is used in Central America and Chiapas in referring to people who are of mixed (indigenous and Spanish) ethnic heritage, though the term "mestizo" is generally used in the rest of Mexico.

[43] Juan Pedro Viqueira is a Mexican sociologist recognized as the world's authority on eighteenth-century Chiapas. See John Womack, *Rebellion in Chiapas: a Historical Reader*, (New York: The New Press 1999), also Juan Pedro Viqueira, *Las Causas de una rebelión india: Chiapas 1712*,(San Crisóbal de las Casas, Chiapas: Ediciones Pirata 2002)

[44] While the Indian population in the Caribbean region was wiped out within two generations, Chiapas, highland Central America and the Andean region, have together been classified as a region where the Indian population suffered a steady decline during the conquest but experienced a recovery during the colonial period. This recovery, however, was less pronounced then the recovery of Indian populations in other regions in the continent such as the region of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador (a region known as the viceroyalty of New Granada), Argentina and Uruguay (known as the region of the viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata). See Linda Newsom, "Indian Population Patterns in Colonial Spanish America", *Latin American Research Review* 20, no.3 (1985): 41-74.

fixed taxes of these products to the Crown, and keeping the difference for themselves. This level of corruption was possible due to the collaboration of district magistrates and local authorities in Chiapas. The taxes were payable in kind to religious institutions and organizations, providing corn to different Spanish institutions and city authorities, and in time of harvest when corn was not needed, it was payable in money. Other Indians in remote villages, however, paid their duties only in money. In order to obtain the necessary cash or be able to pay the tax, many extended their work day, traveled to distant villages for work or intensified their work day. Indian hatred of Spanish abuses grew.

However, a period of crises followed the economic prosperity of these years, with bad harvests between 1707 and 1712, and the collapsing of the fragile subsistence economy. Since contributions had to be paid at market price, as prices tripled, contributions did as well. Moreover, the new bishop, Juan Bautista Alvarez de Toledo, started implementing his own agenda, which included the construction of new charity facilities--projects that required money. For this purpose the bishop started his inspection tour in 1709, seeking to impose the demands of higher payments and new duties on the Indian population.

Another aspect of the crisis were the political conflicts among the Spaniards over the control of the growing Indian population and its religious affairs, which were perceived as idolatrous, pagan Indian practices and therefore threatening to the church.[45] Before 1712 confrontations arose between Indians and church authorities over religious disputes, in spite of the unifying efforts of bishops in Chiapas. Protests against the church agenda and economic burdens increased. In 1712 however, appearances of the Virgin Mary in Santa Marta Xolotepec and later in Cancuc further heightened

[45]In 1674, Marcos Bravo de la Serna was appointed as bishop of Chiapas. His agenda included evangelization of the Indians, reducing the control of the Dominican Order because of their inability to bring Indians under the church realm, and the fight against corruption. However, his successor, Francisco de la Vega, following different priorities, initiated a persecution of "idolatrous Indians". He became a powerful man, exercising his power through excommunication. See Viqueira, *Las Causas de una rebelión india: Chiapas 1712*,(San Crisóbal de las Casas, Chiapas: Ediciones Pirata 2002)

tensions.[46] The rebellion led by a girl and her family lasted three months, during which miracles occurred and Indians affirmed that God wanted an Indian church with Indian authorities. The Spanish repressed the rebellion using armed forces from Guatemala and Tabasco. Nevertheless, historians agree that the idea of self-appointed Indian clergy was not tolerated because it challenged not only the colonial church, which remained at the heart of the empire, but also the economic and political structure of the Crown.

Rebellion in 1868 and the Re-emergence of the Indigenous Economy Rooted in Culture

More than 150 years after the rebellion of 1712, another rebellion took place in the Chamula region (see Map 1) in Chiapas. Various historical events led up to this rebellion. Following Mexico's bitter struggle for independence from Spain from 1810 to 1822, the economic and political consensus at the national level was undermined by disputes between the rival elites: conservatives and liberals. These disputes continued up to the time of the French invasion of Mexico (1861-67), Benito Juarez, a lawyer and Zapotec Indian from Oaxaca, had won election as the president of Mexico. After the French were expelled, Juarez was twice re-elected: in 1867 and again in 1876. The liberals supported the *Leyes de Reforma* (reform laws), written and proposed by Juarez, which provided for the creation of free, secular public education and limited the power of the Church by divesting it of its massive properties.[47] The conservatives strongly opposed the reform laws

[46] In Cancuc, a 13-year-old Indian girl witnessed the appearance and heard the voice of the Virgin. The word spread and people from ten different villages supported her testimony. A chapel was built for the Virgin, according to her wishes. Spanish authorities, however, had María López, the Indian girl, and her father whipped and ordered the chapel to be destroyed. On August 8, at a meeting of devotees from Cancuc held in a neighboring town, the girl gave the sign to begin a rebellion against Spanish rule.

[47] It is worth noting that two tendencies among liberals dominated the scene. Some "conservative" liberals shared views similar to conservatives, such us favoring free trade and viewing private property as a means of individual freedom, the promotion of laws favoring extensive landholdings under individual ownership and the rejection of states' regulation. Social liberalists on the other hand rejected free trade based on comparative exchange proposed by Adam Smith and favored protectionism (due to the fact that in practice, England itself, had gained economic strength through protectionism, as had Germany, France and the U.S.).

and struggled to retain the Catholic Church's power, influence and enormous landholdings, and the army's privileges.

In Chiapas, struggles for the defense of economic and political interests occurred, with both conservatives and liberals using these as opportunities to recruit Indian support. Though Chiapas was already a state divided three ways: wealthy landlords, peasants, and Indians, it became even more polarized. The wealthy ranchers of the highlands, driven to maintain control over the economy and labor, sided with the conservatives. The wealthy ranchers of the lowland valley, anxious to own church proprieties and land in the valley, sided with the liberals. Both conservatives and liberals divided indigenous communities as they tried to gain support. The liberals in the lowlands encouraged Indians to refuse to pay church taxes and to worship as they wished. A cult appeared in a Tzotzil community in 1867. A recounting of the rebellion that followed is based on 30 years of Tzotzil research carried out by Jan Rus from the Harvard Project and from George Collier. Indians from different communities gathered to worship magical "talking stones" discovered by a Chamula woman near a town called Tzajalhemel. With the support of Pedro Díaz Cuzcat, a fiscal who was initially sent to investigate the case, Tzajalhemel grew to become not only the religious center of the region but also the trade and business center within only a couple of months. Liberals in the lowlands were pleased when their desire to diminish the political control of the conservatives, represented by the elite in San Cristóbal, began to be realized. Nevertheless, they had not foreseen the negative effects the new cult would have on the economy of the conservatives, as by 1868 the church in San Cristóbal had no Indian attendance and no significant trade was present in town.

They also favored the state as a regulator-promoter of the social welfare of people through the promotion of education, health, etc. and struggled for equality and a just distribution of resources. Finally, this movement, also known as the *Liberalismo Social Mexicano,* favored collective organization and ownership of resources and democratic reforms. See. Jesús Reyes Heroles*. El Liberalismo Mexicano III. La Integración de las ideas* (Mexico D.F.: FCE, , 1982)

It did not take long before the conservative elite of San Cristóbal reacted and repressed the cult. On December 2, 1868, fifty armed men were sent to seize images of the new church and to arrest the leaders. This event was followed by an increase in taxes. In 1869 Governor Pantaleón Dominguez launched a tax reform.[48] The new taxes were scheduled to be paid quarterly. The expectation regarding the Indians was that since they had submitted to church leaders the previous year, they would accept the new reforms. Yet as the government enforced the first tax contribution and imprisoned tax violators, confrontations arose, and Indians returned to their religious refuge in Tzajalhemel. As before, Indians experienced repression and the seizure of their sacred images. However, as the group of ladinos were returning to San Cristóbal with the seized sacred items, they were killed, and the killing of more ladinos followed. Governor Dominguez declared a war of "civilization over barbarism" and on June 21, 1869, 300 Indians were killed in San Cristóbal. In the days following, Dominguez sought for and raised economic support for his war on barbarism. On June 30th over 1,000 men marched to Chamula and executed another 300 Indians, in spite of their many pleas for mercy. Army raids continued, and on July 7 another confrontation resulted in the death of 200 Indians and four Ladinos, killed in Yolonchen near San Andrés. Indians who were striving to be seen as loyal to the authorities participated in these massacres.

Although a tax reform was implemented during this period, economic expectations did not play a key factor. In an atmosphere of political uncertainty, political groups contended for control over Chiapas' political structure. In Chiapas the majority of the population were dominated and used in this struggle, and

[48] Pantaleón Dominguez was appointed military Governor in 1867 by the commander of the liberal forces led at that time by Porfirio Díaz. Although he did not belong to any political faction (neither liberal nor conservative), he was recognized for his military career and his participation fighting against the French. Eventually Pantaleón Dominguez fought liberals and conservatives alike. See "¿Guerras de Castas según quién?" in Kevin Gosner and Arij Ouweneel eds. *Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas and Andean Highlands.* (Amsterdam: The Center for Latin American Research (CEDLA), 1996)

rebellions broke out against the rigid religious system. This rebellion, similar to the rebellion in 1712, occurred over religious restrictions. These religious struggles later became a political movement. Initially religious rituals were seen as a challenge to the Catholic Church, the soul of the Spanish empire. *These latter rebellions, which were manifested as religious rebellions, entailed higher levels of oppression as a pre-condition to the open rebellion. During the rebellion new sites were created as places for indigenous worship, and later as places to institute a new church. Overall, these religious locations eventually re-emerged as dynamic socio-cultural sites which allowed for the practice of economic and social principles rooted in culture and identity, and were beyond the control of the Spanish Crown. It was at this stage, that the movements were crushed* (Vos 1999). This raises a question regarding the existing relationship between religious grievances, economics and rebellion. Consequently, we first explore this relationship below, followed by the general reappearing themes in rebellions in the region, and finally set forward an interpretative argument regarding the dynamic factors involved in the rebellions included in this first part of the chapter.

Making Sense of Religious Grievances, Rebellions, and Economic Arrangements

Karl Polanyi (1957) has observed that capitalism was a historical anomaly. He argued that previous economic arrangements were "embedded" in social relations. With the arrival of capitalism, however, this relationship was reversed--social relations were defined by economic arrangements. Polanyi's contribution to economic analysis shows that in the sweep of human history, *rules of reciprocity*, *redistribution and communal obligations* were far more frequent than market arrangements. More recently, and in relation to rebellions, James C. Scott has argued in his book *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, that peasant rebellion analysis

needs to shift from solely, mechanic *causes* (taxes, harvests, hunger, etc.), to factors that are connected to inherent values, cultural elements and community which shape peasant responses. Scott's work, dedicated to studying early twentieth-century peasant rebellions in Burma and Vietnam, concluded that:

> Woven into the tissue of peasant behavior, then, whether in normal local routines or in the violence of an uprising is the structure of a shared moral universe, a common notion of what is just. It is this moral heritage that, in peasant revolts, selects certain targets rather than others, certain forms rather than others, and that makes possible a collective (though rarely coordinated) action born of moral outrage . . .
>
> How, then, can we understand the moral passion that is so obviously an integral part of the peasant revolts we have described? How can we grasp the peasant's sense of social justice? We can begin, I believe, with two moral principles that seem firmly embedded in both the social patterns and injunctions of peasant life: *the norm of reciprocity* and *the right to subsistence* (italics in original). [49]

Based on this perspective, Gosner (1992) has reported that the *Mayan moral economy* has historically shown a consistent preoccupation with local *political autonomy, legitimacy, and the security of subsistence.* Regarding rebellion in religious terms, Gosner states that:

> . . . because community values and codes of conduct were articulated through myth and ritual, a defense of the moral economy often took the form of a defense of community religious practice. For the Maya, moral economy was embedded in beliefs about the supernatural---about the interdependence of humankind and the gods, about the

[49] In Kevin.Gosner, *Soldier of the Virgin*: *The Moral Economy of a Colonial Maya Rebellion* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1992)

> omnipresence of spirits, about the sacred character of the natural world, about the potency of visions, and about the efficacy of ritual. In other words, the Mayan moral economy extended beyond their concerns as peasants to encompass the cultural and spiritual preoccupation that defined their identity as a distinctive ethnic group (Gosner 10).

We contend, therefore that the rebellions expressed in religious issues obligate the reader to rethink the issue of *sacredness* and economic arrangements as *cultural expressions of peoples' interests and values.* Only then can social and economic arrangements fall into place as expressions of acting upon social consciousness. Consequently, if conflict is understood as an action carried out which is based on an intentional interest to re-establish the sacred equilibrium and to get rid of oppressors, rather than to merely "defend" the community, it follows that the importance of the natural desire of community members to express themselves through social, economic or political arrangements becomes indispensable to understanding rebellion. It can be argued therefore, that since the Mayan worldview did not differentiate between the sacred and secular, *that grievances and demands in the past, (e.g., the right to worship), were rooted in the deep desire and effort to restore equilibrium and to make sense out of their existence in a context of total dispossession and fragmentation*[50]. This effort was expressed in a *cultural renewal by proposing their own rituals, saints, and eventually their own economic arrangements, which reflected and expressed their identity*. Past rebellions in Chiapas, therefore, can be viewed as a response to the effects of imposed and hostile economic arrangements that strained the pre-existing arrangements to the limits, and consequently, reduced the possibilities of continuing to *be* Mayan.

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[50] See Raúl Vidales. *Utopía y liberación el amanecer del indio*, San Jose Costa Rica: Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones, 1988.

General Dynamics of Rebellions in Chiapas

Although the relationships between colonizers and indigenous peoples were not only of violent domination but also collaboration, simulation, etc., we highlight the oppressive side due two historical facts. First, that a movement of resistance against the conquistadors, who viewed Indians not as subjects but as "living objects"[51] took place immediately after the conquest. Secondly, all known sacred Mayan records, such as the *Popol Vuh*, the *Rabinal Achi*, the *Diálogo* or "original" *del baile de la conquista*, from the Quiches; the *Memorial de Sololá*, de los Cakchiqueles, and the *Ritual de los Bacabes*, the *Cantares de Dzitbalché* and the *Libros de Chiam Balma* of the Mayas from the Yucatan Peninsula, when dealing with the conquest, are dominated in their narratives by feelings of humiliation, impotence, destruction and pillage.[52] It is important to note that contemporary Mexican writers have emphasized the effects of the conquest on Mexican society at large, and that the trauma of the conquest is not an exclusive historical experience of indigenous peoples.[53] Nevertheless, the indigenous discourse has emphasized this experience of conquest and colonization to articulate their reality of current economic and political marginalization. In accordance with indigenous discourse, therefore, this work highlights this facet.

We now move to a discussion of the second part of our first consideration at the end of Chapter II, which is the premise that the initial acts of collective violence occurred as the dominant group, (the conquistadors), found the exercise of violence an effective tool to achieve socioeconomic goals. Violence used by the oppressed in their struggle for freedom became, therefore, a reactive response. Three aspects of this initial violent inflection can be named. The

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[51] Tzevtan Todorov, *La conquista de América. El problema del otro* (Mexico, Siglo XXI, 1987)

[52] See Mercedes del la Garza, "Visión maya de la Conquista" in Glantz Margo, *La Malinche, sus padres y sus hijos* (México D. F.: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNAM 1994)

[53] For example, see Octavio Paz*, El laberinto de la soledad y otras obras.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), and Carlos Fuentes, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, S.A., 1985).

first is a *disabling aspect*, evidenced in the legacy of the widely-held belief that none of the indigenous peoples could rule themselves, nor that they held any entitlements as humans or Christians; and most of all, that none of these indigenous peoples had the intellectual ability to promote development or sustain an economic structure. The second is a *violence promoting aspect*, as the dominating ideology made clear that the use of violence was a necessary and effective tool to sustain an economy of subtraction, maintaining the economic and political benefits for the dominating elite, and necessary for the Christianizing protection of the dominated Indians. Acts of violence were portrayed as a benign necessity. Finally, there was a *legal-impunity aspect.* As massacres and killings coexisted with the exercise of law, the colonial administration left a legacy of the belief that repression and law could complement and supplement each other, and failed *to build credible institutions rooted in the culture and owned by the people*. Consequently, research will be needed to discover if the roots of impunity in contemporary Mexico, and more specifically, in Chiapas, can be found in the seemingly peaceful coexistence of order and the brutal denial of human rights.

To help us visualize what has been said we offer an illustration (Model 8). We argue here, as pointed out by Oommen (1997), that ethnicity is a dynamic economic and political *process,* which implies a primary source of institutionalized or structural violence. The arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, the following conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés in 1521, and the arrival of Pedro de Alvarado in Chiapas in 1524; represent the highlights of the process of ethnicity. This process took two forms: genocide and ethnocide. Ethnocide has been defined by Pierre Clastres as a "systematic destruction of ways of living and thinking of a people that are different than the ways of the perpetrators of the destruction". Ethnocide does not imply death, but rather the renouncing of one's culture, language and way of living due to the perception that these elements of identity become ineffective and of little or no value. Ethnocide occurs, it is said, when people

arrive at the conclusion that in order to improve themselves they have to stop being themselves.[54] Contrastingly, the process of genocide in the Americas caused a dramatic decrease in the indigenous population. Added to the loss of people and their way of living, 1500 years of accumulated cultural and scientific knowledge was also lost. After the destruction of indigenous environmental wisdom, the potential for further ethno-development became limited (Leff 1998).

Historical evidence also points to colonialism as a vital part of the ethnic process, affecting the economy that had arisen from the heart of indigenous peoples, which we here call *true-to-culture economy*. Economic exploitation, systemic discrimination and deprivation of human rights on a massive scale, brought about a disabling environment and an accumulation of injustices that were passed on from generation to generation. Evidence also suggests that the communal society was at one point confronted with a situation of responding to social change, and their resulting cultural revitalization challenged the empire by proposing an alternative structure.

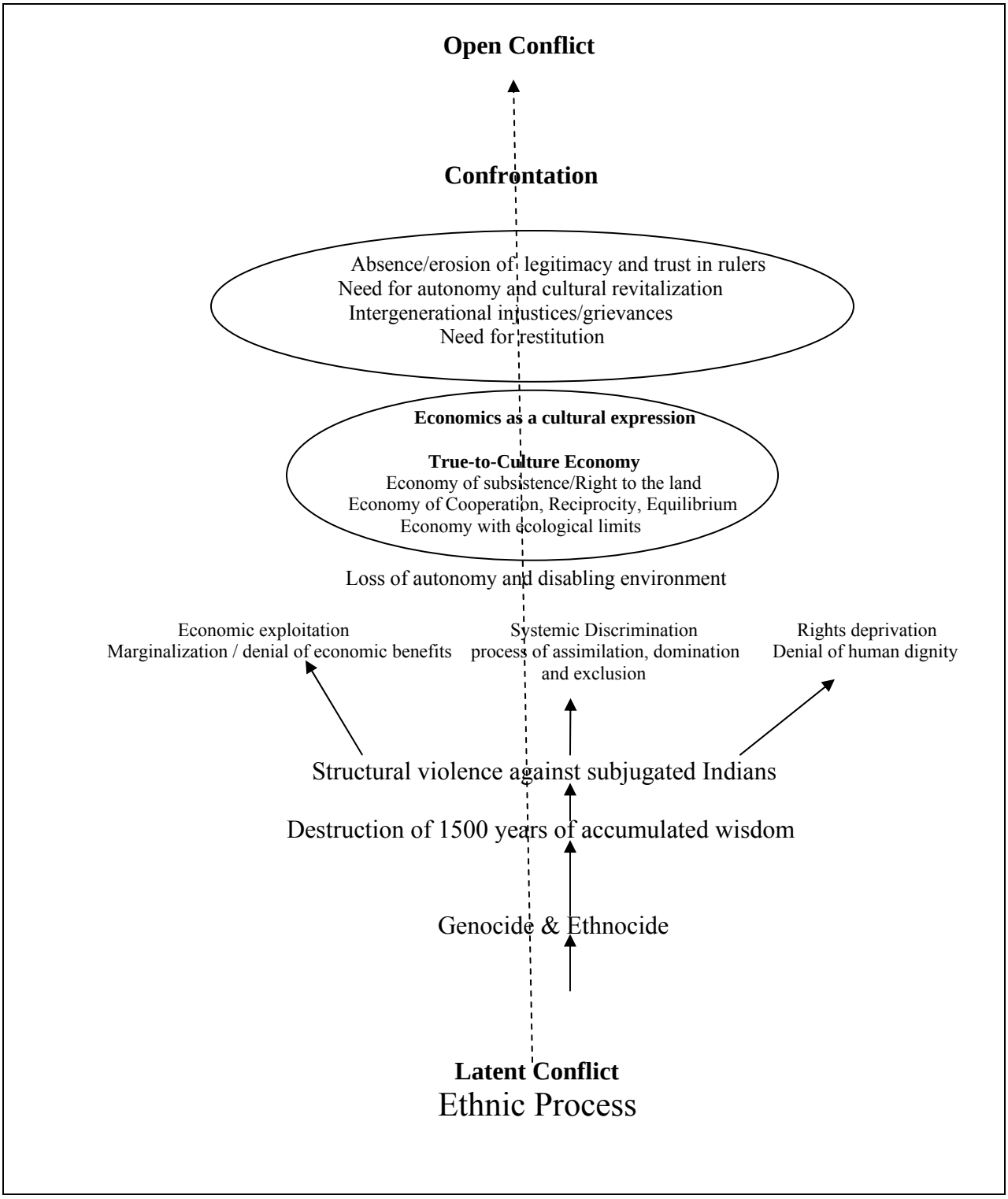
Confrontation presupposed a polarization between the governing group and the governed one, in this case, between the Spanish rule and indigenous people, which was characterized by *an erosion of legitimacy and trus*t. The lack of legitimacy was based mainly on the collective evaluation of the *perceived* ruling system by those who were governed, and not on a malfunctioning of the government. In other words, absence of legitimacy was derived from the fact that people did not see or perceive at a given point, a reason to *trust* or to consent to an oppressive government. This crisis of legitimacy and social awareness became a green light to an active search for change. It has been observed that the active search in social groups to produce a *participatory* and *just system* appears to be inevitably tied to an awareness of inequalities and injustices in the ruling system (Castilla de Pino, 1976). This search

[54] Quoted by Miguel Bartolomé, and, Mabel Barabas in *La Plurabilidad en peli*gro (México D. F: Instituto Nacional de Antropología, 1999), p. 32.

process causes a latent conflict, (rooted in intergenerational injustices), to surface as an open conflict sparked by an interference with deeply held values and encouraged by an erosion of legitimacy, trust, and the awareness that the elite used its power to create unbearable conditions of existence.

The loss of freedom to continue the practice of economics as a cultural expression of the people inextricably followed the loss of autonomy. Consequently, indigenous communities became actively engaged in the demand for *restitution*.

Model 8 The Dynamics of Rebellions (I)



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General Reappearing Themes in Rebellions in Mexico and in the Region

It is argued here that in the reappearing latent conflict of long duration three constant themes can be identified across rebellions in Mexico. The first is one of *autonomy,* which allows people to continue the exercise of economic, political, religious, and cultural expressions. Autonomy however, has been historically threatened by regional or national socio-economic projects. The second is the consequent *erosion of the legitimacy of rulers*. The third is the demand from the rebels for *restitution* which occurs when the aforementioned autonomy is taken away.

Historian Friedrich Katz (1988) has warned of the erroneous attempts to simply project backward the characteristics of rural rebellions in Mexico. Nevertheless, Katz argues for a possible link which has appeared as a constant from the classical Mayan period to the revolution of 1910: an increasing gap between the elite and the people. This gap has been expressed in a loss of legitimacy and in alienation from the cultural expectations of the people. The fall of the Mayan and the Teotihuacán civilizations was due to insurrections connected to the increasing isolation of the priesthood from the common people, as the priesthood practiced and imposed more and more complex and cosmopolitan religious practices. Similarly, the Aztecs experienced a loss of legitimacy as their subjects despised the heavy Aztec emphasis on human sacrifice, and many of the dominated peoples in the Aztec empire decided to join with the conquistador Hernán Cortez in 1520's to fight against the Aztecs.

The independence of Mexico in 1810 appears to be preceded by the loss of legitimacy of the crown. The Revolution of 1910 was also precipitated by the loss of support for the Porfirio Díaz regime, which had adopted a foreign lifestyle and become disconnected from Mexican culture. The popular view was that his administration had benefited foreigners over Mexicans, imposing

greater burdens in extra taxes, and the elimination of traditional rights and traditional autonomy.

Each case of insurrection also stands as a case of the *removal of rights* and *autonomy* of villages in favor of regional and central powers. All these events occurred within a context of agricultural-economic crisis and a growth in the population which resulted in a need for social transformation, yet this transformation was resisted by the elites. However, the rebellions in Chiapas as well as in Oaxaca, where the Indian populations resisted assimilation and did not share mestizo Mexican grievances, did not coincide with national uprisings; i.e., the Mexican independence of 1810 and the revolution of 1910. Rather, these rebellions followed other aims. Alicia Barabas (1986) states that the ethnic resistance in the 19th and 20th centuries in Oaxaca, though it did not seek the removal of the European dominators or call for the destruction of the social structure, it did seek to recover lost territories, to stop the exploitation imposed on people by the elites and to resist being governed by leaders who did not represent the community's interests. Barabas also argues for a comprehensive understanding of rebellions which have been part of a wide substratum of ethnic insurgence, emerging in critical moments and in periods of intense repression but mainly remaining latent, incubating in silence and underground.[55]

Carlos Manso (1996) has suggested a similar approach for understanding the rebellions in the isthmus of Oaxaca.[56] Manso argues that the Tehuantepec indigenous rebellion of 1660 in the isthmus of Oaxaca occurred in a context of political tension, when the Spaniards and ministers tried to reduce the level of economic and political *autonomy* of Zapotecs who held extensive routes of trade. Added to this was the economic burden of the imposition of

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[55] Mabel Barabas, "Rebeliones e insurrecciones indígenas en Oaxaca: la trayectoria histórica de la resistencia étnica", in *Etnicidad y pluralismo cultural: la dinámica étnica en Oaxaca* (México D. F., Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1986)

[56] Manso argues that rebellions in Oaxaca have been part of a historical *continuum*. See Carlos Manso, "Comercio y rebelión en el obispado de Oaxaca. Tehuantepec y Nexapa, 1660-1661" in Hector Díaz-Polanco, *El Fuego de la inobediencia*: *autonomía y rebelión india en el obispado de Oaxaca* (CIESAS-OAXACA, 1996)

Spanish goods. Indians had to purchase these goods from Spanish officials and pay for them with indigenous products, at prices (buying and selling) set in advance by Spanish officials.

This Zapotec rebellion demanded the *restitution* of previous rights--the right of political self-determination within the region for commerce space and control, which had been threatened or taken away. Manso highlights this struggle for restitution of autonomy as one of the *constant factors* in the uprisings that followed. The repression carried out in 1660 to control the rebellion did not address the core of the uprising. In 1715 Zapotecs rebelled in a different context but with the same demand for self-determination. In 1736 another revolt occurred, this time against the priest in Juchitán, (situated in the heart of the isthmus), with Zapotecs demanding the restitution of their rights to the land and of the livestock that belonged to the community. In the same vein, a major uprising took place in 1834 led by Che Gorio Melendre against national modernization forces, European land usurpers, foreign merchants, the threat of the loss of autonomy and entitlements to the land for the sake of centralized state power and capitalist development (Campbell 1994).

Continuing today the threat to autonomy remains a key element to understand the ethnic identity movement and cohesion behind recent Zapotec struggles in the isthmus of Oaxaca. In this region the most recent major uprising received national attention, when the COCEI (a Worker-Peasant-Student Coalition of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec) won the municipal elections of Juchitán in 1981, becoming the first city to be governed by a radical political organization since the Mexican Revolution. Regarding this movement Campbell states:

> While the strength of current Isthmus Zapotec ethnic identity was forged by political struggles from the colonial period into the twentieth century, COCEI emerged within the context of recent capitalist transformations in the Isthmus. Social and economic changes wrought by capitalist development radicalized the Isthmus

> peasantry, divided the Juchiteco community along class lines, and politicized an emerging group of Zapotec activists and intellectuals. This leftist intelligentsia conceptualized Isthmus history as a linear process of ethnic resistance culminating in COCEI (Campbell 1994).

Adolfo Gilly (1998), whose contributions have been discussed previously regarding the rebellion in Chiapas, has also suggested the importance of an analysis of the reappearing elements in the long process of rebellions in Mexico. Gilly has identified two *constant features* that have been present throughout time. The first feature has been the resistance to let the land be turned into merchandise, an issue previously discussed, and second has been the *resistance to economic or political policies that threaten the autonomy of the people, which itself is rooted in the land.* The idea of autonomy as a reason to rebel remains alive and vibrant in the roots of Mexican culture. The protection of autonomy, therefore, can explain rebellions in Mexico regardless of whether their conceptual classification is rural, urban, Indian, or Mestizo.[57] Gilly concludes that the Zapatista uprising of 1994, has to be understood as a recurring mistake made by the elites regarding the rights and entitlements of people to autonomy and the land. For example, in the century previous to the Zapatista uprising, Enrique Creel was the governor of the state of Chihuahua. On February 25, 1905, during a period without signs of social unrest, he issued laws to regulate and modernize the land, limiting and/or canceling the rights of peasants to the land. In both 1905 and 1994, armed uprisings followed an attempt to violate economic and political rights.

We argue, therefore, that the latent conflict which resurfaced in 1994 has revealed persistent reasons for rebellion found also in

[57] Furthermore, the major and national armed uprisings in the history in Mexico can be seen as the result of a slow, accumulated process of resistance. In fact Gilly suggests that the Mexican revolution can be seen as the product of the convergence of forces that struggled from the past, from below and from the top. This convergence of forces has defined the particular characteristics of Mexican political culture. After the Mexican Revolution a delicate equilibrium emerged, rooted in this political culture with a strong understanding of the legitimate right to rebel in order to protect this delicate equilibrium.

other contemporary urban and rural uprisings.[58] In spite of the seriousness of the latent conflict, it may nonetheless not seem very threatening or urgent when it appears as an insignificant daily struggle. In fact, the rebellions of 1530, 1532-1695, 1712, 1868 and 1994 which occurred in Chiapas and were recorded as violent rebellions are not the rule but the exception. Gosner (1996a) has stated that in the history of Chiapas, the *daily struggle* for recognition and the protection of rights was more common than were organized violent actions.[59] This substantiates the belief that a durable solution to the conflict will be impossible without dealing with the persisting issues that are present not only in the Zapatista movement but at the roots of daily resistance in Mexico. It is interesting to note, that in 1994, major violent confrontations disappeared within days after the initial uprising, but nonetheless a daily struggle for recognition was once more set in motion. Also, in spite of the cessation of major hostilities, official and legal counter-insurgence acts of violence were not reduced or stopped.[60]

To more clearly examine the dimensions of this daily mode of resistance, it is necessary to note the expansion of the Zapatista movement. Leyva has classified the Zapatista movement as existing in four stages (see Box 11). By 1997 the Zapatista movement included more than seventy organizations, which had offered support and converged politically with the Zapatistas (Leyva 1999). Leyva has called this phenomenon the Nuevo Movimiento Zapatista or NMZ (the New Zapatista Movement).

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[58] John Coastworth has noted that the patterns of rural resistance and rebellion as known today were common in urban cities throughout the Spanish empire and that the distinction between rural and urban rebellion only appeared in the nineteenth century in Latin America. In spite of this, urban rebellions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries maintained an organic relation with rural uprisings. See "Patterns of Rural Rebellion in Latin America" in Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico. Princeton (Princeton University Press, 1988).

[59] Although it is true that the history of Chiapas shows dramatic rebellions, these kinds of rebellions seem rare when compared to the daily struggles of resistance. See Gosner, Kevin "Historical Perspectives on Maya Resistance: The Tzeltal Revolt" in *Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas and the Andean Highlands*. Amsterdam (Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericana, CEDLA 1996)

[60] It is estimated that 70,000 troops, (one-third of the total Mexican Army), have been concentrated in the southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero. Added to this, the presence of paramilitary groups in Chiapas has made this state a specifically vulnerable place for recurrent violence and displacement. See Gilberto López y Rivas, *Autonomías: democracia o contrainsurgencia* (México D. F., Era, 2004)

While the EZLN at level A makes reference to a political-military structure, the NMZ at levels B, C and D show the expansion of the movement. Even though it is evident that the recognition of rights offers a solid alternative to reduce the likelihood of violent uprisings, nevertheless, the conflict in Chiapas persists today.

Box 11 Civil Expansion of the Zapatista Uprising in 1994[61]

Level A
EZLN

Level B
There are 26 organizations at this level such as: Comités de Consulta Popular del EZLN (EZLN's Committee for Popular Participation), Comités Locales y Regionales de la Convención Nacional Democrática or CND (Local and Regional Committees of the Democratic National Convention), Diócesis de San Cristóbal de las Casas (Dioceses of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico) DESMI A.C. (civil association); CHILTAC A.C (civil association), Comisión Nacional de Intermediación (National Commission of Mediation), Assamblea Estatal Democrática del Pueblo Chiapaneco or AEDPCH (State Democratic Assembly of the Chiapaneco People), Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, (Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Center), Centro de Derechos Humanos Agustín Pro (Agustín Pro Human Rights Center), Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Francisco de Vitoria (Fray Francisco de Vitoria Human Rights Center and other 16 additional organizations

Level C
This level entails 39 organizations some of these are: Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones Indígenas y Campesinas (State Council of Indigenous and Peasant Organizations), Alianza Cívica (Civic Coalition), Sindicato de Trabajadores Técnicos, Manuales y Administrativos del INAH (Workers Union of the Institute of Anthropology), Taller Libre de Calzado de Tepito (Shoe Makers of Tepito), Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Urbanos de la Ruta 100, SUTAUR 100 (Labor Union of Urban Public Transportation Workers in Mexico City; Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana/ SITUAM (Metroplitan University Workers Union), Federación de Sindicatos Universitarios (Federation of University Labor Unions), Frente Auténtico de los Trabajadores FAT (Authentic Workers Front), UV y D, ENOC and Other 29 other organizations.27. Frente Popular Francisco Villa (Francisco Villa Popular Front)

Level D
Eight organizations are included at this level those are: Comités Internacionales de la Consulta del EZLN realizada en 1995 (International Committees of the Consultation of the EZLN carried out in 1995), Comités Internacionales de la Convención Internacional Anti-Neoliberalismo (International Committees of the International Convention on Anti-Neoliberalism), Comités de "Aguascalientes" de Ultramar (Aguascalientes Overseas Committees), Amnesty Internacional,. Parlamento Europeo, Equipo Latinoamérica (European Parliament, Latin American Team); Grupos de Apoyo al Zapatismo en Londres, Barcelona, Noruega, Bélgica, Berlín, etc. (Zapatista Support Groups in London, Barcelona, Norway, Belgium, Berlin, etc.), Comisión Internacional de Obispos (International Commission of Bishops) and the Foro Intercontinental por la Humanidad y en Contra del Neoliberalismo. (Intercontinental Forum for Humanity and against Neo-Liberalism)

Source: Xóchitl Leyva Solano, "De las Cañadas a Europa: niveles, actores y discursos del Nuevo Movimiento Zapatista (NMZ) (1994-1997" in *Desacatos* CIESAS México (Primavera 1999): 56-88

[61] See Appendix for a complete version of Box 11.

Without diminishing the extensive contributions of research on indigenous and non-indigenous rebellions in Mexico from colonial times to contemporary Mexico, (which have been well documented by Friedrich Katz, John Tutino, William Taylor, John H. Coatsworth and others)[62], we move to the analysis of the most recent Mayan rebellion, the Zapatista rebellion.

B. The Zapatista Rebellion of 1994

Mexican writer and historian Adolfo Gilly (1998) has pointed out that the belief in the right to subsistence is deeply embedded in indigenous communities and in all agrarian communities in Mexico, and that the threat to this right to subsistence has been present in most agrarian conflicts in Mexico. Although the expressions of past rebellions have varied since they have all emerged in different contexts, nevertheless, at the heart of the rebellions there has been a long-standing objection to the idea that land should become an article of merchandise. Along the same line, John Womack (1969) reported that the Mexican revolution of 1910 was launched by people who resisted giving up their land. Peasants in Mexico have rebelled and continue to rebel, because of their refusal to surrender the essentials of a *moral economy of subsistence*, e.g., land and reciprocity, to commercial exchanges and the law of money imposed from outside (Scott 1976, E. P. Thompson 1991, Gilly 1998). Yet why is the right to the land relevant to peasants? And how do these rights to the land or entitlements affect people so as to lead to rebellion? This section will focus on the first question. Chapter IV will attempt to answer the latter question.

In order to answer the first question, we will examine the Zapatista rebellion and set forth two arguments. First, we argue that the rebellion of 1994 reflects the result of a continuum of a

[62] A collection of the work of these authors and others are found on Friedrich Katz, *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988)

latent conflict that erupted as the market economy attempted to rearrange the legal system, favoring global interests and ending social agreements regarding the entitlement of the land. These agreements had been achieved by peasants through the greatest upheaval in 20th-century Latin America, the Mexican revolution of 1910-1917, which claimed over a million lives. Secondly, we argue that the protection of the right to subsistence, the right to land, entitlements, etc., *make sense only because they affect the daily lives of people and their possibilities of survival.* This happens in the following two ways:

> a) In the context of southern Mexico, the right to subsistence and the right to the land are the necessary conditions to achieving something beyond merely "owning" the land; namely, survival, the avoidance of high levels of child mortality and the premature death of adults, and the maintenance of identity.
> b) In conjunction with the contributions of the Social Identity School already discussed in the last chapter, the right to land is linked to the achievement of invisible human needs--personal security, pride, self-esteem and dignity, which develop as people are free to work and carry out activities on the land.[63]

Finally, in contrast to the moral economy analysis, which to some extent views rebellions as *defense acts to protect harmonious pre-conditions from disturbing new forces*, we see in the case of Chiapas, that protection of "community values" was not the sole factor. Rather, the Zapatista rebellion emerged within a culture of resistance rooted in a fragmented past, with five hundred years of domination and class differentiation.

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[63] Land, identity, and dignity are integral values found in indigenous culture, with culture being understood as a creative, open process of rethinking both the ethnic past and community values and which in turn forges new cultural forms and meanings within new contexts see Howard Campbell, *Zapotec Renaissance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural Revivalism in Southern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994)

Consequently, we present four main social movements which arrived in or appeared in Chiapas before the rebellion. These movements took root in communities with a disturbed past and where colonial style socio-economic structures which continued to humiliate them were still in place. In the process of presenting these four social movements, we will begin by analyzing the socio-economic context. In these communities, the threat of loss of the right to subsistence and to the land meant the loss of the sole hope remaining after a long process of the disabling of people's abilities to carry on with their lives. Five hundred years of *humiliation* had reached unbearable and intolerable levels.[64]

In Latin America in the 1960's, human rights movements began and extended to regions where violations and killings were occurring in silence, unknown to the public at large. Due to changes in state-society dynamics, globalization, and the human rights movement in Latin America, organizations arrived in Chiapas, making the human rights violations involving the killings of peasants and indigenous people, public knowledge. A second movement appeared on the continent, the Indian political movement, with a historically-rooted self-identity. The members of this movement projected themselves as actors with a political and economic agenda. A third actor was the movement generated by the Catholic Church, which in the '60s was creating a space and channels to voice the long-standing conflict. The praxis of the Diocese of San Cristobal in 1974 was to respond to the same grievances that were later made public in 1994 in the first Zapatista communiqué. Lastly, present in Chiapas was the FLN (National Liberation Front), which later became the EZLN (Zapatista Army

[64] The concept of humiliation is used here as defined by Berma Klein and Bas De Gaay Fortman as a form of cruelty that destroys the capacity of people to believe in themselves, to take initiative and to change their reality or circumstances as social agents. See Berma Klein Goldewijk and Bas De Gaay Fortman *Where Needs Meet Rights: Economic Social and Cultural Rights in a New Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999). See also "The Golden Triangle of Human Dignity: Human Security, Human Development and Human Rights" in Marie Muller & Bas de Gaay, eds. *From Warfare to Welfare: Human Security in a Southern African Context*. (The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004). For a panoramic view of resistance in Chiapas see García de León, *Resistencia y utopía, memorial de agravios y crónica de revueltas y profecías acaecidas en la provincia de Chiapas durante los últimos quinientos años de su historia*. (México D.F.: Era, 1985).

of National Liberation). This armed movement was organized after the massacre of students in 1968. The FLN and other activist groups, such as the Maoist and Linea Proletaria (Proletarian Line), emerged seeking to create the right conditions for a revolution, and found in the indigenous communities a people already in rebellion.

These arriving or emerging actors made the crisis in government and the erosion of legitimacy and trust public knowledge by creating *alliances.* Benjamin Walter makes a remarkable point regarding revolutions, *that although for Marx, revolutions acted as the train-engines of history, it could be said that revolutions are the way that humanity, which travels on the train, pulls the brake.*[65] This paper, therefore, argues that the actors of the rebellion pulled the "brake" by shouting "*¡Basta!" ("Enough!"), in order to stop further humiliation, destruction and restore equilibrium*. As in earlier rebellions the discourse and actions of the rebels were rooted in the deep desire and hope to restore equilibrium and to make sense of their existence in the midst of destruction, dispossession, oppression and exclusion. Thanks to other actors arriving in Chiapas, this rebellion counted with a growing civil representation nationally and internationally. These arriving actors, moved by different interests, found in Chiapas indigenous peoples living in resistance and latent conflict. In this sense external actors shared the "brake effect" even though there was not agreement among the revolutionary groups on the use of violence. As previously stated the full implications of the appearance of these actors cannot be appreciated without understanding the economic context and the state of rebellion which already existed in Chiapas prior to the arrival of these actors. Consequently, we pause to analyze this context before continuing our analysis of political actors in Chiapas.

The Excluded Peasants and the Economic Context

[65] Benjamin Walter, *Gesammelte Schriften*, t. 1, vol. 3, Suhrkamp Frankfurt am Mein, (1975), 1232. Quoted by Adolfo Gilly in *Chiapas: la razón ardiente (*México, D. F.: Ediciones Era, S.A., 1997), 17.

Tello (2000) has reported that in Chiapas during the 1960's there existed few fincas (a Central American term for the large landholdings of ranches and farms commonly used in Chiapas) that were massive landholdings. Following the reform laws in the mid-1800's which greatly limited the landholdings of the Catholic Church; the Dominican orders lost their land and left Chiapas. At that time various families seized former Dominican land, greatly increasing the land they already owned; for example, the Castellanos, Dominguez, and the Alborez families. Simultaneously to acquiring ownership of the land, the families also acquired the indigenous peons who legally "came with the land". There were several, well-known, powerful fincas near the jungle--las Delicias, el Rosario, la Codicia, Santa Rita, el Porvenir, San Antonio, Chapayal, Petulón, and Quetzil. The Porvenir finca had 202 hectares of land, 5 hectares planted in corn, 30 hectares in coffee and 100 hectares in pasture land. The rest of the land was divided between land the Indians used to cultivate crops for their own use and forest land.

The Indians stayed on the fincas because they had nowhere else to go. Nearly all had lost their land under the *encomienda* system, and the few who had retained some land had later lost it due to changes in the reform laws, which striped them of their mortgages. The Indians living and working in these fincas were forced to leave when the land dedicated to farming was turned into pasture land for cattle. These changes within Chiapas cannot be fully appreciated without recognizing their placement within the broader scale of changes occurring in the nation. Three presidential administrations, Ávila Camacho (1940-1946), Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), and Ruiz Cortinez (1952-1958), opted for an economic policy that we here call *industrialism*, which sought to bring development via the building of economic structure, and initiated the creation of institutions to channel its benefits.[66] The

[66] During this period, the IMS, (the Mexican Institute of Social Security), and the Secretary of Health were created. As the process of industrialization advanced, the benefits of economic growth were sought through the maximizing of the use of resources, higher levels of employment, and by reaching a complete

national policies were designed in accordance with a competitive economy traveling on a *speedway* of development. New roads were built, and credit for the mechanization of agriculture was made available for farmers, though mainly for those who dominated local and state politics, that is the 2.4 % of landowners who owned most of the land (60%). Cattle raising took the lead as a new model of growth. More land was turned into pasture land and into the production of the most significant crop for Chiapas--coffee. Consequently, less labor was needed, and Indians expelled from the fincas immigrated to the jungle and new communities appeared. Immigration and the building of new communities became possible due to land reform, which functioned as a short term solution to the social consequences of the economic model of modernization and industrialism. Land was made available to Indians, peasants and others in the region of *las Cañadas*. Las Cañadas became the heart of a latent conflict in Chiapas, a seedbed of rebels. The logic behind the implementation of an economic strategy that carried with it high social costs, is evidenced in the conclusions of Thomas Benjamin:

> From the 1890s to the 1950s and beyond, the governments of Chiapas sought the modernization of the regional economy and society by means of roads and schools, developmental projects, and social reforms. If we accept their statements and promises at face value, they wanted to create a productive and prosperous regional economy that would in time benefit all social classes. If mass poverty persisted, as it did, it was understood to be the result of too few roads, insufficient federal investment, low market prices for crops—but also the "backwardness" of traditionalism of Indians and the complacency, laziness, alcoholism, and corruption of villagers, farm workers, peasant farmers, and ejidatarios. The

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"horizontal" import substitution. The overall target was to move away from export dependency and toward a more integrated industrialized economy. President Cárdenas' nationalization of the petroleum industry, although it scared foreign investors at the time, paved the way for industrialization.

model of modernization, although often adjusted and reinvigorated, was never doubted (Benjamin, 1996).

The social consequences began to take a violent turn twenty years before 1994. Benjamin (1996) recorded the case of the peasants in the town of Venustiano Carranza, in the Lacandon jungle in Chiapas. In 1945 the residents had requested that the federal government provide restitution of lands they claimed had been stolen from them during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz.

This dictatorship, known as the *porfiriato*, lasted from 1876 to 1911, interrupted by the presidency of Manuel Gonzales (1880-1884).[67] Finally in 1965, President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz (1964-1970), gave the petitioners the entitlement of 50,000 hectares, though 20,000 of those were controlled by wealthy cattlemen who were unwilling to give up the land, even though ordered to do so by the government. A dam was later constructed, reducing the size of the ejido even further and placing extreme pressure on the peasant community.[68] In 1976, when several hundred peasants "invaded" the disputed land and started farming, the Mexican army forced them off the land, burned their houses, jailed their leaders,

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[67] After independence, Mexico's elites entered a period of internal conflicts and instability that opened the door to territorial sessions. In 1848 the U.S. invaded Mexico and the National Palace came under U.S. control. Mexico was forced to give up more than 50% of its territory. Later, Mexico was invaded by France, and after the expulsion of the French, the country entered a period of reforms. At the end of the nineteenth century Mexico was ruled by a dictatorship. The Porfirista economic development program sought to restructure the Mexican economy, which had not occurred during the unstable 19th century. At the national level Díaz introduced "order" and discipline in the nation's finances, seeking higher levels of wealth production based on the large haciendas, industries and businesses. Díaz aimed to keep the demands of organized labor under control (using force if necessary) and most of all to open the economy to foreign investment in sectors such as infrastructure, the dynamic sector and services. His economic program strengthened the elites and powerful landholders in Chiapas. See David Márquez Ayala, "El Tratado de Libre Comercio de Norteamérica, ¿Opción adecuada para México bajo su actual contenido*"* in *Problemas Macroeconómicos de México: Diagnóstico y Alternativas. Tomo II.* (México D. F.: Juan Pablos Editor, S.A. UAM, UNAM, INESER, JP., 1995)

[68] Chiapas produces currently more than half of the electrical power to the nation of Mexico. Nevertheless, in 1996, 64 municipalities in the state refused to pay this service due to their financial inability to do so. See *Para Entender Chiapas*: *Chiapas in cifras*, Centro de Información y Análisis de Chiapas, Coordinación de Organismos No Gubernamentales por la Paz de Chiapas, Mexico City: 1997.

and killed or wounded several of the "invaders", including women and children. The peasants attempted a second "invasion" three years later and were again expelled.

Though very few agrarian occupations had occurred in Chiapas during the 1950's and 60's, during the 1970's, land occupations followed by violent expulsions, confrontations with *pistoleros,* police, or army forces, and the jailing and assassination of peasant leaders became very frequent throughout the Chiapas countryside.[69] The trend of increased violent repression of rural "troublemakers" would reappear in the 1980's and again in the 1990's (Benjamin 1996). Among the few reports that appeared in a timely fashion revealing the situation of human rights violations in Chiapas, was the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) report in 1993-94. The report classified Chiapas as number one violator of human rights in the country. Between 1989 and 1993, 2290 indigenous people were jailed and only 914 were set free during that period (Monroy 1994). At the root of the rebellion however, laid contradictory presidential decrees regarding the status of land at the heart of the region in conflict (see Box 5).

[69] See Jorge Martínez Ríos, "Las Invasiones agrarias en México (o la crisis del modelo de incorporación-participación marginal)," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología,* XXXIV October-December 1972, pp. 764-765, quoted by Thomas Benjamín, *A Rich Land a Poor People: Politics and Society in Modern Chiapas* (Alburquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), *234.*

Box 5 Presidential Decrees and the Roots of the Rebellion of 1994

The violent confrontation was rooted in part in the contradictory land reforms made by the federal government during the 70s and 80s. These presidential decrees worked more as "pressure valves" to the increasing consequences of industrialism and modernization. In fact, many of them were merely political acts taken in order to gain support or to benefit certain companies or individuals who sided with official political affiliation.

The first such decree was the above mentioned one by President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, who entitled ownership of the land to settlers in the Lacandon Jungle. These settlers were from different indigenous peoples that had requested the restitution of their lost land. A second decree was made public on March 6, 1972, by Luis Echeverría, the president of Mexico from 1970 to 1976. The Lacandon Decree, surprisingly and disconcertedly, issued 614,321 hectares of land to 66 Lacandon families[70] that lived in the Cañada region[71]. This amounted to 9,307 hectares (22,988 acres) per Lacandon family. The presidential decree ignored the rights of 4,000 Chol and Tzetzal Indians already inhabiting that region. From one day to the next 37 communities were threatened with expulsion from the region, in spite of the fact that many of them already had legal title to the land, and others were awaiting the issue of their titles. Critics attacked the decree as absurd and as being politically motivated, and pointed out that the Echeverria administration sought political stability and consensus even among the poorest of the poor[72]. His presidential plan was known as the *Program for Financial-Investment* (1970-1976), and tried to reach the poor by achieving the highest level of social spending in comparison to previous administrations. Other programs such as the INFONAVIT housing program for workers, and health programs such as the IMSS-COPLAMAR, were also attempts to reach marginalized groups.

After the oil crisis of 1971, the Echeverria government promoted drilling in Chiapas in order to export oil. The administration financed its programs with international loans available to Mexico at low interest rates. The building of an oil industry and the sacrificing of the agricultural sector stimulated the immigration of peasants and indigenous people from communities in Chiapas to industrial centers. This tremendous economic activity that occurred in Chiapas was the pull factor of rural-to-urban migration. Between 1970 and 1975 the number of roads doubled, benefiting ranchers by making the cattle and milk industries prosper. By 1980, three new dams were built; one of them, the Chicoasén Dam, became the fifth highest hydroelectric dam in the world[73]. With the issuing of the Lacandon Decree in 1972, individuals from different communities eventually found themselves forced to choose between taking unstable temporary construction jobs and losing their land. This decree polarized the agrarian conflict. According to the decree, the Lacandon jungle belonged to the Lacandons, an indigenous people. This declaration obviously reversed the first decree made by Díaz Ordaz, and was followed by the appearance of the Compañía Forestal Lacandona (Cofolasa), the Lacandon Lumber Company. Cofolasa, though affiliated with Nafinsa, a government agency, was owned by private investors and politicians, and made a contract with the most recent "legitimate" owners, the Lacandons. Under this contract, 35,000 cubic squares of lumber were to be extracted from the jungle per year for a period of ten years. As the process continued, the company requested that the government remove the illegal inhabitants of the area, namely the Tzeltals, Tzotzils, Choles, Tojolobals and Zoques. Many resisted and mass protest demonstrations reached the capital city in 1981, though with no success. Lastly, and to the detriment of the communities, President José Lopez Portillo (1976-1982) declared the region of the Lacandon Jungle an ecological reserve, resulting in a complete removal of more communities.

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[70] The contemporary Lacandon People should not be confused with the Lacandon People which rebelled against the Spaniards from 1530-1695. The contemporary Lacandon People are Mayan descendants who arrived in Chiapas from the Yucatan Peninsula, while the first were believed to have arrived from outside the Mayan region.

[71] One hectare is equivalent to 2.47 US acres. 614, 321 hectares is the equivalent of 1,517,388 acres

[72] As Secretary of the Interior during the 1968 massacre in Tlatelolco square, Echeverría was held responsible by many for the bloodshed that had occurred. When he assumed the presidency two years later, he implemented some populist policies to improve his image

[73] See Frank Cancian and Peter Brown, "Who is Rebelling in Chiapas?" In Whiteford, Michael and Whiteford, Scott. Crossing Currents: Continuity and Change in Latin America.. Upper Saddle River NJ: Simon & Schuster 1998

Industrialization and Debt

The economic plan of the Lopez Portillo administration, the National Plan for Industrial Development, was (as its name indicates), geared to support the industrialization process by using returns from the oil industry. As Mexico was discovering great oil reserves, the supply was perceived as unlimited, and this expectation grew as exports improved, promising long-term stability and profits. Although strong state programs were created, such as the SAM (the Mexican Alimentary System), to support the farmers and peasants working the land, nevertheless, the administration faced a massive external debt which grew out of proportion. The collapse of oil prices in the international markets made it impossible to handle the already increased debt. Furthermore, along with the fall of oil prices, the prices of traditional exports declined, leaving Mexico incapable of paying its debt.

The debt crisis and the following implementation of policies required by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) had a dual-nature impact and a resulting consequence. First, the centers of dynamic industrialization entered a recession and dismissed the peasants they had previously hired. These peasants returned to their villages only to find no employment options in agriculture, as agriculture had become chemically intensive in order to substitute labor and increase production. In October of 1976 the IMF approved $1,200,000 dollars in aid, pressing for a reduction of wages, which the Fund erroneously argued had created an excess in demand. Therefore the Fund forced Mexico to establish wage ceilings which are still present in Mexico, *breaking institutional relations between worker organizations and the state*. The Fund also pressured for lower barriers to imports, an evaluation of governmental economic entities, restrictions on currency printing, and the establishment of higher national interest rates. Other than these monetary reasons, no other reasons were recognized by IMF policy makers for the crisis in Mexico. In the end, neither the IMF

policies nor the oil exports made it possible for Mexico to correct its vulnerability.
Economic growth collapsed as well as social spending and the social institutions established by former administrations.

Secondly, the impact was greater due to the elimination of subsidies, which was requested by the IMF as a basic procedure to correct bankruptcy. For the *minifundistas* and other small producers, this meant the loss in 1989 of IMECAF (the Mexican Coffee Institute, created in 1979), which had provided subsidies in the cost of transportation of coffee to markets.[74]

Finally, a consequence became visible in the streets--demonstrations increased as social organizations demanded economic reforms and solutions to the worsening agrarian conflicts, and eventually violence erupted.[75]

Stabilization, Liberalization, and Free Trade

The Presidency of Miguel de La Madrid Hurtado (1982-1988) initiated economic reforms to recover from the crisis. Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) continued and intensified the reforms initiated by President de la Madrid to achieve *growth rates high enough* to provide an acceptable level of employment and a low level of inflation. This 12 year period which ended in 1994,

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[74]The latifundistas owned 60% of the land, and in contrast, the *minifundistas* owned only 1% of land in Chiapas. Each minifundista owned less than ten hectares of land, yet represented 50% of all landholders in Chiapas.

[75] As in Mexico, in Latin America there is a pattern of spontaneous outbreaks of violence following the implementation of austerity programs. This happened in Argentina from 1982 to 1985, and again in 1988, 1989, and 1993, leaving 18 people dead and 230 injured that participated in demonstrations against government implementation of austerity plans, such as price increases, anti-inflationary programs and government withholding of wages due to budget cuts. Other countries have also experienced similar patterns, among them Bolivia in 1983-1987, 1990, 1992, 1993; Brazil (1983-1992); Chile (1983-1985); the Dominican Republic (1984, 1990); Ecuador (1982-1987); El Salvador (1985-1986); Guatemala (1985); Nicaragua (1990); Panamá (1983, 1985); Perú (1976-1985, 1991); and Venezuela (1989, 1991). The main reasons for demonstrations are economic policies connected to the realization of basic needs, (currency devaluations, dismissals, removal of subsidies, price increases of public transportation, price increases in bread, milk, and gasoline, the signing of austerity programs with the IMF, privatizations, and wage controls). See Duncan Green, *Silent Revolution: The Rise of Market Economics in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003)

became known in Mexico as the of the practice of an economic doctrine known as *neoliberalismo*, and was characterized by a) commercial liberalization, b) liberalization of foreign investment, and c) a diminishing role of the state as promoter and regulator of economic growth and social welfare.[76] Table 8 shows the main features of this economic reform. By 1993 the policies had produced impressive results in terms of the reduction of inflation (from 80.8% in 1983 to 7.1% in 1993), a fiscal deficit reduction (from 13% of GDP to 0.3% of GDP in 1994); and positive interest rates which improved savings of nationals and attracted foreign capital. This positive scenario stimulated political leaders to create expectations among Mexicans that Mexico was not far from becoming part of the first world. The signing of the NAFTA agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada on January 1st of 1994 confirmed these expectations.

[76] The economic model followed by Mexico from 1935 to 1982, is known as the Mexican Revolutionary Model.

Table 8 Main Features of Economic Reforms 1982-1994

Financial	*Fiscal*	*External Sector*	*Privatization*	*Deregulation*
Liberalize credit and interest rates	**Balance public Finance**	**Lower taxes on trade**	**Dis-incorporate non-strategic industries in the following sectors: telephone, commercial banking, mining, agribusiness, steel, aviation, food**	**Liberalize freight transportation**
Create a wider variety of savings	**Lower tax rates to individuals and businesses**	**Eliminate non-tariff barriers**		**Eliminate barriers to technological development**
Finance public deficit by means of non-inflationary resources	**Eliminate preferential tax bases in various sectors**	**Develop free trade agreements**		**Eliminate obsolete permits to establish and operate business**
Privatize commercial Banks	**Drastically reduce fiscal exemptions**	**Renegotiate external Debt**		**Promote private participation in the provision of public services (electricity, highways, water, etc.)**
Allow foreign Competition	**Stimulate capital repatriations and strengthen tax collection and fiscal management**	**Facilitate foreign investment**		

Source: Mauricio Gonzales Gómez, "Crisis and Economic Change in Mexico" in Susan Kaufman Purcel and Luis Rubio, *Mexico Under Zedillol* (Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, Inc, 1998), 32.

Article 27

The 1992 presidential decision by Carlos Salinas to rewrite Article 27 of the constitution became a precipitating factor in the Zapatista rebellion. Article 27 had emerged from the revolutionary period (1910-1917), and declared the right of peasants to the land. In short, Article 27 contained an agreement reached between the state and peasants, and resulted in the cessation of rebellions during the 1930's. President Cárdenas has been credited for making Article 27 a reality through the land reform he implemented.[77] Under the reform of Article 27, communal land could be sold, bought, rented or held under contract with national or foreign investors. The corporate character of land holding was canceled and any member of the community could begin the process to obtain an individual title and claim the land to put it on the market. This reform satisfied the U.S. government's long-standing desire for the modification of the Mexican constitution regarding the protection of land from foreigners.[78]

Big ranchers, who had already received 7,646 certifications which protected their lands from 1982 to 1988, welcomed the reform, which represented an additional guarantee for the protection of their lands, as well as allowing the possibility of the

[77] The Constitution of 1917 emerged as a common agreement among the three revolutionary movements during this period. The leaders of these movements, Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa and Venustiano Carranza, were the spokesmen for land reform and the inalienable right to the land by peasants. The rights included in Article 27 were: 1) the right of all peasant communities to receive land and water, 2) restitution of lands and water taken by the "haciendas" (large estates or plantations), 3) the inalienable right to free seizure under a prior claim, 4) distribution of land concentrated in latifundios to villages and 5) the protection of Mexican territory by the prohibition against a) foreigners acquiring land or water and b) financial corporations acquiring rural enterprises. The presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) represents the historical foundation of a corporative state that institutionalized political forces and emerged stronger after the revolutionary period. Among these were worker organizations and campesino organizations which joined the PNR (Partido Nacional Revolucionario), the National Revolutionary Party, founded in 1929. These constituencies became the foundation for the PRM (Partido de la Revolución Mexicana), the National Party of the Revolution, later known as the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which ruled Mexico until the year 2000.

[78] See Lorenzo Meyer, *Mexico y los Estados Unidos en el conflict petrolero (1917-1942)* (México El Colegio de México, 1972) cited by Adolfo Gilly in *Chiapas: la razón ardiente* (Mexico D. F: Era, 1998)

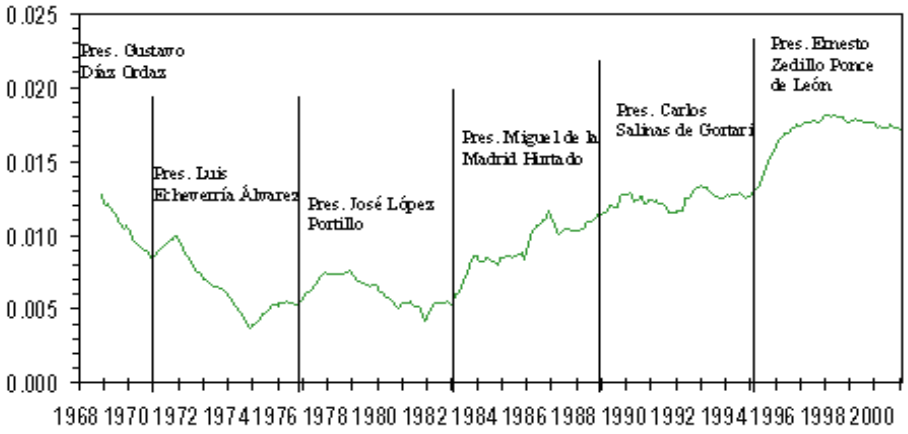
purchase of more land from peasants. In contrast to the rather quick process of documentation of land by ranchers, communities saw little hope of obtaining title to their land, and feared losing the land. In Chiapas, 79 communities had already waited 20 years for the legalization of their lands. Other communities have waited even longer; for example, El Paraiso in the area of Las Margaritas, El Nopal in Ixtapa, and Las Delicias in Trinitaria have each waited 40 years; Tamaulipas in Pijijiapan, 43 years; Santa Rosa community in Tonalá has waited 46 years; and El Letrero in Siltepec has waited 53 years.[79] Furthermore, Gilly points out that the reform of Article 27 set the legal groundwork for a future privatization of the oil deposits of Mexico (Gilly 1998).

In this way the reform of Article 27 reflects the search of the Mexican state to find its place in the global economy; bending to external economic pressures and ending a social contract with peasants, cutting deep into the heart of the agrarian economy.

Regardless of the performance of Mexico, according to international economic experts in the IMF and World Bank, Mexico fulfilled an urgent international condition, which was to regain *confidence* in the Mexican economy. Mexicans alone felt that the social costs were unbearable. Income became increasingly concentrated in 1984 (Gonzales Gomez 1998), and without precedence in Mexico, inequality increased constantly parallel to the implementation of *neoliberal* economic policies from 1982 to 1998. Using an index of dispersion based on the inequality in pay among nine manufacturing sectors in Mexico, the Inequality Project of the University of Texas reported an impressive growth of inequalities in Mexico during this period, (see Graph 4).

[79] See Carlos Montemayor *Chiapas, la Rebelión Indígena de México* (Madrid: Espasa, 1998)

Graph 4
Inequality in Mexico 1968-2000


0.025
0.020
0.015
0.010
0.005
0.000
Pres. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz
Pres. Luis Echeverría Álvarez
Pres. José López Portillo
Pres. Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado
Pres. Carlos Salinas de Gortari
Pres. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León
1968 1970 1972 1974 1976 1978 1980 1982 1984 1986 1988 1990 1992 1994 1996 1998 2000

Source: University of Texas Inequality Project, 1998-2004, available from http//utip.gov.utexas.edu

Following the presidential elections of 1988, Salinas claimed victory in spite of numerous allegations of fraud. This election carried the brand of de-legitimization, as did the subsequent constitutional reforms of his presidency. The official party that ruled Mexico for 70 years, the PRI, also lost ground, and the

elections of 2000 marked the end of a single party government. As a way of summarizing what we have observed up to here, Boxes 6 and 7 of the Appendix, indicate the global and national events that affected Mexico and especially the communities in Chiapas.

We now take a closer look at internal and/or external actors and their interactions within the context of Chiapas.

Civil Organizations and Human Rights

Taking into account changes in state-society relations as well as economic and political accommodation of the state, we analyse the growth of human rights mobilization in Mexico. The expansion of the human rights movement has been facilitated from the beginning by the work of Advocacy Networks, as Keck and Sikkink[80] have labeled the process which started with the formation of Amnesty International (AI) in the 1960's in Latin America. AI emerged as the training ground for what became an explosion of non-governmental organizations pressing for changes.[81] This growth at the continental level corresponded to an international expansion of human right organizations.[82] At the global level for example, the rate of growth and the number of nongovernmental organizations focusing on human rights have exceeded other types of organizations, (see Table 7).

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[80] See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998). Advocacy networks are those networks of activists motivated by core values, ideas and principles that are extended by links among actors at international level. The Advocacy Networks for human right have operated under the belief that individuals can make a difference and bring creative solutions to transform the political system of hosted countries, to change the states' behavior and to promote norm implementation.

[81] See Rafael Reygadas Robles, *Abriendo veredas: Iniciativas públicas y sociales de las redes de organizaciones civiles* (México D.F.: Servicios Informativos Procesados (Sipro) A.C., 1988)

[82] See Rodolfo Stavenhagen, "The indigenous Peoples and the State in Latin America: An Ongoing Debate." In Rachel Sieder, *Multiculturalism in Latin America: Indigenous Rights, Diversity and Democracy* (Houndmills: Palgrave, Macmillian, 2002)

TABLE 7
Number and Percentages of
International Non-Governmental Social Change Organizations
(by the major issue focus of their work)

Issue area	1953	1963	1973	1983	1993
Human R	33	38	41	79	168
	30%	27%	22.4%	22.7%	26.6%
World Order	8	4	12	31	48
	7.3	2.8	6.6	8.9	7.6
International Law	14	19	25	26	26
	12.7	13.4	13.7	7.4	4.1
Peace	11	20	14	22	59
	10.0	14.2	7.7	6.3	9.4
Women Rights	10	14	16	25	61
	9.1	9.9	8.7	7.2	9.7
Environment	2	5	10	26	90
	1.8	3.5	5.5	7.5	14.3
Development	3	3	7	13	34
	2.7	2.1	3.8	3.7	5.4
Ethnic unity	10	12	18	37	29
	9.1	8.5	9.8	10.6	4.6
Esperanto	11	18	28	41	54
	10	12.8	15.3	11.8	8.6

Source: Union of International Association, Yearbook of International Organizations in Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders* 11

In 1981, Latin America with 220 organizations, rated as having the highest number of human rights non-governmental organizations in the developing world. Yet in Mexico particularly, even though human rights violations in Argentina and Chile were denounced by human right organizations, the massacre of students in 1968 by the Mexican government did not gain international concern. Nevertheless, in Mexico several organizations were operating whose vision was rooted in the Catholic Church's social teachings. Among them were organizations concerned with development and/or social issues.[83] By the mid-1980's human rights awareness had spread in Mexican society, and although in

[83] Among these organization are found: IMES 1959 (Mexican Institute of Social Studies), USEM 1960 (Union of Mexican Business Leaders), FAT 1960 (Authentic Workers Front), el Instituto de Desarrollo Comunitario en Guadalajara 1963, Fundación Mexicana para el Desarrollo Rural 1963; el Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento COPEVI 1965); el Centro de Desarrollo Popular 1966; Desarrollo Social de Mexicanos Indígenas, 1966.

1984 only four human rights organizations existed in Mexico, by 1993, the year prior to the Zapatista rebellion, Mexico hosted more than two hundred. The globalization of human rights was a powerful force spreading throughout Mexico. Not surprisingly, the Mexican government perceived the Zapatista uprising as a greater challenge than that of the students of 1968 who marched in the streets. Consequently government officials sat down and negotiated with the peasant rebels in February of 1994, surrounded by a human chain made up of representatives of a new coalition of 240 non-governmental organizations, called (ESPAZ) Civil Space for Peace.

By 1990 numerous human right groups were openly active in Chiapas.[84] Although there is scarce information regarding this explosion of non-governmental organizations in Mexico, there seems to be agreement that the propelling factors of such a spread were the 1982 economic crisis in Mexico, and the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City. In both cases, it was the incapacity of the government to control the economy or to protect its population that led to civil initiatives. In the case of Mexico, the economic disillusion derived from *the collapsing expectation of twelve years of economic growth did not lead directly to an armed uprising, but to a massive civil mobilization.* From 1983 to 1996, 24 new organizations appeared, struggling to meet the social demands in such areas as persistent poverty, and the urgency for democracy. Surprisingly, these organizations and others already operating in Mexico, began the process of constructing a society with new proposals based on the needs of the people, avoiding models of

[84] Among these organizations we find: Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanas, Ameritas Watch, Amnistía Internacional, Centro de Derechos Humanos, Centro de Derechos Humanos del Sonocusco, Centro de Derechos Humanos de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín, Centro de Derechos Humanos Sur Sureste, Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Chiapas, Comisión de Defensa los Derechos Humanos de Chiapas, Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Costa, Comisión de los Derechos Humanos de la Suprema Corte, Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Zona Sur, Comisión de los Derechos Humanos de SCLC, Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Tapachula, Comisión de los Derechos Humanos del Congreso del Estado, Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Sonocusco and an additional 22 organizations that one way or another had already made an impact on Chiapas prior to the rebellion.

charity or public assistance.[85] Massive civil organizations filled the vacuum left by the government's lack of initiatives and inability to confront the crisis.

The Indian Movement

As we have discussed above, before 1994 Chiapas appeared to be forgotten by the federal and state governments, but nevertheless, powerful families were present and active. The violent expulsions and confrontations between pistoleros and indigenous communities which occurred from the 1950's to the 1970's and resulted in horrendous violations of human rights could not alone explain the high levels of mobilization up to 1994, without considering the changes in the state. The changes already discussed above, are: the rupture of institutional relations between workers, peasants, and the state; the application of the neoliberal agenda; the reform of Article 27; and the collapsing expectations by civil society due to poor performance (especially in times of crisis) of the state-led economic growth which had not delivered benefits to society at large.

In addition to its place within a national context, we also place the Indian movement in Mexico within the broader context of indigenous mobilization in Latin America, as a movement that needs to be understood in light of *changes in the state,* and more specifically*, changes in the citizenship regimes* within the scope of institutional changes of *the state* (Yashar 2005). As Yashar argues, political identies are historically influenced, confined, or tied to institutions and succeptable to change. States can privilege certain political identities, but are not always successful at influencing or

[85] Rafael Reygadas has demonstraded that from the colonial time to 1982, Mexico practiced a policy of public assistance, and that this paternalistic and controlling model started collapsing as the state was forced to reduce social assistance and social spending, following the IMF's recuperation plan after the 1982 crisis. The assistance policies that dominated governmental economic policy originated in Catholic social teachings. These doctrines, later secularized, are recognized as the origin for the creation of social and civic organizations in Mexico. See Rafael Reygadas Robles *Abriendo veredas: Iniciativas públicas y sociales de las redes de organizaciones civiles Abriendo veredas* (México D. F.: Servicios Informativos Procesados, A.C. (Sipro), 1998)

shaping society evenly. In turn this unevenness of the state's presence in particular regions allows for the coexistence of local power structures which can, when threatened, mobilize and offer resistance to the state. This is understood by the fact that the relation between state and society is dynamic and of mutual influence. Therefore, in the case of Mexico, the resistance and challenge of indigenous movements need to be seen as a response to changes in the State and in particular to the end of a corporativist form of citizenship regime which began in the 1940's (Cardenismo) and ended in the 1980's and 1990's with the emergence of a neoliberal form of citizenship. Having said this, we focus on the process of mobilization and the key issues of the indigenous discourse.

Alongside the human rights movement, international associations of indigenous people on the continent moved toward the consolidation of an indigenous network for the protection of indigenous rights. Thus, indigenous mobilization in Chiapas occurred along with continental mobilization (see Box 4 in the Appendix).

Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1995) and Carlos Humberto Durán (1998) have collected the following key elements of the indigenous discourse. The first element is the issue of *definition and legal status*. While specialists, scholars and bureaucrats insist on focusing on the needs of the indigenous population and debate over the definition of who is Indian, the meaning of "indigenous", or the quantification of indigenous people; the right of self-definition stands as a central issue in the indigenous discourse. Yet the recognition and protection of this right is not perceived by public authorities as a necessary step for the building up of democracy and development. The second issue is *land rights*. Indigenous peoples consider this one of the fundamental conditions for survival; nevertheless, the issue of land as a means of survival has not generally been considered vital to democracy and development. Governments in Latin America have neglected this right. Land represents more than a resource or property for those

wanting to escape extinction. Consequently, the indigenous concept of land cannot be assimilated into the modernization discourse. It demands understanding and recognition. The third key issue is *cultural identity*. The past and current practices of acculturation and assimilation has been denounced by Indian organizations as cultural genocide or ethnocide, yet governments have not reoriented their approach toward indigenous peoples nor perceived this issue as a necessary step toward development and democracy. The fourth central element in the indigenous discourse is the issue of *social organization and customary law*. The survival of indigenous communities as social entities depends on the formal recognition of customary law and the traditional legal system of communities. This is probably one of the most controversial issues at both national and international levels. The recognition of customary law has implied the issue of collective rights and self-determination as is set out in ILO Convention 169, the UN draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Organization of American States's draft declaration on the international rights of indigenous people. Currently, the indigenous claim for collective rights comes from the understanding that for many indigenous communities in Chiapas the struggle is not for the return to a "traditional law", but as is argued in this text, to remove the cause of historical unjustices and set aright their legitimate power to decide over and regulate their own affairs (Sieder 2002). As Sieder points out, in Chiapas, to be regulated by tradional law has meant to be loyal to the official party (PRI), which promoted political affiliation, co-optation, and a preference for the protection of powerful political identities. As mobilization has grown, government intervention has occurred based on the argument for the protection of human rights (that is of individuals) and multiculturalism. In reality such interventions have become the means to maintain the hegemony of dominant elites. Worst of all, the intervention during the 1990's for the sake of the protection of individual rights, ended in a systematic sabotage of efforts for autonomy and sef-determination. Among indigenous leaders in

Chiapas as well in Oaxaca the debate between the universal concept of human rights and particular collective human rights has taken a historical perspective (Diaz-Polanco 2000). The underlying tension of this conflict is complex. In their struggle for community rights, collectivities perceive that the real struggle is against the long-standing liberal ideology of two centuries, starting with the French revolution of 1789 and the birth of an ideology which gave preference to individual autonomy over collectivities, functioning hand-in-hand with the expansion of capitalism, the territorial expansion of empires, colonialism, and the processes of the foundation of political nation-states (Wallerstein 1996). It is only after World War II that the idea of collective rights became recognized, an event which facilitated the independence of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Regarding the case of Chiapas and Oaxaca, many questions still remain unanswered at the center of the debate. For instance, can the state be trusted with the application of universal rights when the state has been historically abusive of its power over indigenous peoples? (Sieder 2002). Who has the authority to effectively sanction a state which, when under the argument of applying the universal concept of human rights, violates community rights and eventually human rights, though it is professing to protect the latter? Currently the debate continues as bridges between liberalism and communitarism have been proposed by authors such as Charles Taylor (1995), Will Kymlicka (1996), and Luis Villoro (1998). Nevertheless, in the case of Vietnam, Salemink (2006) has reported that emphasis on particularistic rights (indigenous rights) may be counter-productive under certain circumstances. Additionally, the debate has been enriched by yet another type of proposal set forth by John Rawls (1995), (Diaz-Polanco 2000).

In Latin America the state has resisted recognizing legal pluralism. Instead, the states have adopted only a degree of tolerance toward traditions and customs of communities. Therefore, the civil and political participation of many villages is very limited. Finally, the final theme is *political participation*. The

state in Latin America emerged as a prototype of the states in the modern world, with a dominant ethnic group forming or consolidating a State and thereby subordinating other nations, the so called “ethnic minorities”. The Mexican State, for instance, declared in its Constitution that all individuals born in the Mexican territory were to be declared Mexican. With this label, indigenous peoples of socio-cultural diversity came under a political system which denied the right of multicultural and pluralistic societies. All indigenous peoples became "equal" by declaration of equality under the law, but only as Mexican citizens in the Constitution, though in fact they were excluded from the political arena. Indeed, the Mexican government had transferred its mono-ethnic and dominant nature to its Constitution. It was not until 1992 in which the Constitution recognized the multiculturalism of Mexico. Indigenous movements on the other hand, look beyond mere political participation, challenging the historical concept of the nation-state as well as the idea of citizenship which is devoid of rights. As Yashar has pointed out, the indigenous movement calls for heterogenous notions of *who* is a citizen, *how* citizenship is defined, and *where* authority is placed (Yashar 2005).

Human Dignity and Liberation: The Church in Chiapas Responds to Industrialism and Poverty

In 1974 the Catholic Church organized an Indigenous Congress. This event was supported by the federal and state governments to celebrate the 500th birthday of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, defender of the Indians in the 16th century. In the Indigeous Congress, the Bishop saw an opportunity to become a church that served the Indians instead of a church that is served by Indians. This Congress was a great event: three hundred communities were represented by 1,230 delegates, which included 587 Tsetzales, 330 Tzotziles, 152 Tojolabales and 151 Choles. In preparation for the Congress, the Dioceses made use of its already existing 1000 catechists in the region and organized a support group composed of teacher's assistants, lawyers and students providing sessions in economics, history, agrarian law, etc. In the Congress, the church provided a bottom-up model of decision making. This model later inspired Indian organizations (Tavanti 1999, Harvey 1998).

During the 1974 Congress, sixty priests and nuns approached the Indian leaders and organizers of the Congress and asked how people of faith could help. In answer, Chol, Tzeltal and Tojalabal leaders requested: "Walk with us, side with us, look at our suffering. If all you have to offer is an empty catechism, nothing will change. But if you are offering us the Word of God, then put it into action." (Tavani 1999:135) Following the Congress the role of the religious community leaders changed drastically. The Dioceses left off attempts to replace Indian culture, and embraced and affirmed Indian culture. Catechists became facilitators rather than educators. Though in 1974 these leaders were still appointed by the bishop, after the Congress the Diocese renounced the tutelage of catechists, and catechists were appointed by the communities. Later on, communities discussed with the Dioceses the need for deacons to work with catechists in the 600 communities. Both parties agreed that the communities would

select the deacons and decide what kind of work they would do, and the Dioceses would recognize them and facilitate a training period for them before beginning their work. Usually the training consisted of three years of community service. In November of 1975 the Diocese wrote a document affirming its commitment to work with the poor and for the poor and to facilitate the growth of an indigenous church (Ruiz 1993:6; Tavanti 1999: 135).

Boxes 8 and 9 in the appendix present a sample of the grievances and accords that were reached at the Indigenous Congress in 1974, collected by historian John Womack. More than merely grievances that help to explain the uprising, *at the root of these grievances and accords we find a cultural conflict with the dominating economic arrangements.* Also the grievances and accords can be seen as the acceptable and non-acceptable economic practices of the market economy from the perspective of the communal economy. The basis for these demands, however, rests in the existence of rights as people and collective entities. Collier (1999) has rightly pointed out that these grievances were identical to the grievances that later appeared in the Zapatista demands of 1994.

The following premises represented the daily activities of the Dioceses of San Cristóbal led by Bishop Samuel Ruiz.

1. The conditions of poverty and marginalization have perpetuated living conditions unacceptable to the will of God.

The church struggle to eradicate the roots of poverty and marginalization was declared time after time in homilies, pastoral letters and courses by the Bishop and catechists, as the first condition toward liberation. The conviction was that *developmentalism* emphasized growth and productivitism to the detriment of the poor. Liberation, and not development, therefore dealt with the roots of poverty. As had Gustavo Gutierrez and other theologians previously, Samuel Ruiz, the bishop of San Cristobal, insisted that poverty was a complex social phenomenon that kept people living in non-human conditions. Herein lays a fundamental difference, argued Gutierrez and Samuel Ruiz, between the orientation of theology in Europe/North America and Latin America While the critical problem for theology in Europe and North America is the issue of the *nonbeliever*, (the condition of the secular individual who does not believe in God), in Latin America the critical issue for the church is the *non-person* (Smith 1990: 32). In the words of Gutierrez:

> In a continent like Latin America, the challenge does not come to us primarily from the non-believer, but from the non-person, that is to say, from the individual who is not recognized as such by the existing social order: the poor, the exploited, who are systematically deprived of being persons, they who scarcely know they are persons. The non-person questions before anything else, not our religious world, but our economic, social, political, and cultural world; and thus, a call is made for the

> revolutionary transformation of the very bases of a humanizing society. Our question, therefore, is not how to announce God in an adult world; but how to announce him as a Father in a non-human world (Gutierrez 1988:79).

The good news of the gospel of liberation, therefore, was to be preached to those that without any hope are forced to live under conditions far from the will of God. Moreover, *the preferential option for the poo*r represented an active way of life opposed to not only poverty, (an action that most societies applaud), but to the root causes of poverty, (an action that is much less popular and often considered suspicious and subversive). In 1987, Samuel Ruiz, the bishop in Chiapas, described the poor as "those who are the fruit of the dysfunction of the social structure" (Tavanti, 1999). The causes of poverty, he argued, came from unjust, oppressive political and economic structures, but overall, poverty was an expression of sin.

For the Bishop, however, the preferential option for the poor in Chiapas was not so much of an option as a necessity (Floyd, 1997:66). Not to opt for the poor meant to remain part of the oppressive social system. Poverty was seen as the fruit of domination, and the church had no option other than to stand with the oppressed and actively struggle against the structural causes of poverty. Consequently, Bishop Ruiz insisted that the concept of *liberation* was more adequate than that of *development* to describe the desire of the people in Chiapas (see Box 10).

Box 10 Development and Liberation in Chiapas

It was in 1969 at the meeting of the SODEPAX (the Committee for Society, Development, and Peace) that a group of theologians from Latin America who had been reflecting on and articulating a "Theology of Development" were invited to contribute to a sociological understanding of the role of the church in socioeconomic development. The conference was sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest, flying to Campine, Switzerland for the conference, in reviewing his notes for his talk to be delivered at the conference entitled: "The Meaning of Development", decided to change the title to "Notes on the Theology of Liberation". He considered this a more adequate wording in the content of the talk, thus officially inaugurating liberation theology (Smith 1990). Regarding the preference for the word liberation, Kirk points out that it was chosen for its direct contrast to the word "dependency", a word made popular by Latin American economists to explain the situation of Latin America within the international system. Another reason was "the long historical usage in the biblical and church traditions as synonymous with salvation" (Kirk 1979:26).

Overall, liberation theology brought about in Chiapas a popular empowerment that consequently made the indigenous community to no longer see themselves as just recipients of benefits and concerned with their own *well-being*, but to perceive themselves as *agents* of social and economic change benefiting all Mexicans; Indian and non-Indian alike.[86] Liberation Theology has been considered as both a theological movement and as a social movement. According to Gutierrez and others, the praxis of liberation comes first (creating a movement) and theology comes as a second step, as a reflection of previous praxis "after sundown".
This Liberation Theology approach would have a tremendous impact in Chiapas, in the midst of a forgotten region of Mexico.

It was in 1968 in Medellín, Colombia that the Catholic Church officially declared its preferential option for the poor. Recently, in 2003, Gustavo Gutierrez again explained the meaning of the preferential option for the poor as the response of the church to the poorest of the poor and the oppressed.[87] Gutierrez is known as the "father" of liberation theology even though liberation theologians such as Leonardo Boff, a well-respected Brazilian theologian, have made it clear that liberation theology has no fathers or mothers other than the people in Latin America who in their daily lives reflect the light of the gospel (Boff, 1986).

2) The conditions of poverty are the point of departure to start the long walk of conversion.

[86] Amartya Sen makes this distinction in the analysis of women's movements and social change in *Development as Freedom*. On one hand, the well-being of women, and the emphasis on women as agents of change, may be seen as separate issues; yet both complement each other. The later, however, tends to be an area of greater need of advancement, since the agent-aspect is often neglected. Education, earning power, and literacy, contribute to the agent-aspect and can improve the living condition of women, children and men.

[87] Presentation given by Gustavo Gutierrez at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, October 3 and 4, 2003.

In Chiapas, the path of transformation for the church was to opt for the poor. For society the path was to stop accumulating and perpetuating injustices. For the poor and oppressed it was to reject the existence of poverty in the midst of abundant resources, and to overcome the power of fate, taking hold of their own destiny. For real conversion to occur in Chiapas, the Bishop argued, the process of the conquest and colonization and its consequences of oppression and exclusion (which in many cases in the past had been approved by the church), had to be stopped.

3) Social change was possible due to the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection brings hope in the midst of a hopeless reality.

The Bishop affirmed that the resurrection of Jesus Christ meant to pass, as persons, as people, from death to life, to physically put themselves on the path toward historical resurrection.

> "The Resurrection of Christ…reaffirms our hope in a resurrection of humanity in history, resurrection which is prior, and guides us to the final resurrection. In this, humanity is always invited to a reconciliation of groups and social classes and to establish the natural order--violated, submerged and distorted…in recognition of human rights and the re-establishment of a human community whose structures function for humanity and not for accumulation." But these longings of resurrection, which all people share, will not be part of history if we are not committed to working seriously to make them a reality. That which necessarily carries them through is the acceptance of the way of the cross.[88]

[88] Samuel Ruiz García, "Sistematización de los documentos de tatik Samuel, escritos del 31 de diciembre de 1993 a abril de 1994" Francisco Argüelles, comp. (San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas: Diócesis de San Cristóbal, Spring 1994) cited by Charlene Floyd *The Government Shall be Upon Their Shoulders*..(New York: The City of New York University, 1997) Carlos Fazio, *Samuel Ruiz: el caminante.* (México D.F.: Espasa Calpe Mexicana S.A. 1994).

The resurrection gave hope in the struggle to bring about the "natural order", an order of justice and equity. The serious commitment of the church and followers of Christ was to live out the resurrection. Christians were called to live "the way of the cross." In Chiapas this rationale produced social change and hope for a better future, so much so that during 1994 in the midst of the rebellion, the pastoral work of the church in San Cristóbal was blamed by the government and analysts as the main cause of the rebellion.

4. The church's role is to precipitate the building of the Kingdom of God: a church that serves the Indians and not a church that is served by the Indians.

This belief was put into practice with the transformation of the church into an indigenous church based on indigenous theology. The Dioceses of San Cristobal, Chiapas embraced Indian social organization and culture and abandoned the hierarchical model of church. In empowering indigenous people it moved from standard liberation theology to an indigenous theology. As a consequence, the Dioceses changed its methodology in dealing with communal meetings. Instead of continuing with the "nopteswanej" (to make the other understand) approach in communal meetings limited to religious matters, the "Tijwanej" approach was adopted. "Tijwanej" has been translated by Mexican social scientist Xóchitl Leyva Solano, as "to bring out what is in another's heart" (Tavani 1999). The discussions therefore, inevitably included reflections on the economic and social issues that affected the lives of indigenous communities in light of the Christian faith. The church discussed the causes of poverty with the people.

Another element embraced by the theology of the church was the acceptance Mayan worldview within the Christian faith, even though these same Mayan perspectives had been seen as idolatrous during the conquest. Mayan people experienced more freedom to

be themselves and speak from their worldview. Religious practices, that had been silenced or hidden for hundreds of years for fear of repression were heard and seen in public.

The early event that revealed the work of the church among Indians and communities was the 1974 Indigenous Congress in San Cristobal. Many analysts have pointed out that this congress was the landmark in the beginning of social mobilization in Chiapas. The congress was the result of many years of work following the teachings of the Catholic Church in Medellín. Bishop Samuel Ruiz's diocese had 2,000 catechists, half of whom were Indians and spoke Indian languages. The Bishop worked with people in 2,708 communities and for 34 years stressed human dignity and the building of the kingdom of God among the communities. The dioceses of Chiapas covers 48% of the territory of Chiapas and represents 1.5 million people, distributed over 36,821 square kilometers. The Bishop, who was later chosen to be the peace mediator between the Zapatista rebels and the government, considered that, after all of his work, the main change in his diocese was that the Indians had experienced a "toma de conciencia".[89] They had come to see themselves in a different way and to be fully aware that everything, including social and political arrangements, was not necessarily what it originally was supposed to be. Overall Bishop Samuel Ruiz has stated that the Indians learned to become the subjects of their own lives (Womack 1999).

[89] The terms "toma de conciencia"and "concientización" refer to an awareness of political/social/economic reality, both from a historical perspective and in the present, and a resulting awakening to the rights and responsibilities of individuals, governments, organizations, corporations, etc., involving personal and collective engagement in action and decision making.

The impact of the 1974 Indigenous Congress can be seen in the number of peasant organizations formed between 1974 and 1988 (see Box 11). These organizations operated in three identificable regions; the eastern frontier (Las Cañadas and the Selva Lacandona), the north (Simojovel) and the center (Venustiano Carranza). All of them struggled for the land. As they suffered repressions and the killings of their leaders, most if not all, sought to make alliances with national movements. In general, the government denied these organizations *recognition* as legitimate peasant organizations.

Box 11 Peasant Organizations in Chiapas Following the 1974 Indigenous Congress

Name	Type
La Cañada, Selva Lacandona	
Ejido Union Quiptic ta Lecubtecel (1975/1976) (United in Our Strength) UEQTL	Community Union
Ejido Unión Tierra y Libertad (1975-1976) (Land and Liberty) UETL	Community Union
Ejido Union Lucha Campesina (Peasant Struggle) UELC (1975-1976)	Community Union
Union of Uniones Ejidales (1980)	Credit (150 communities)
(1982) Unión de Crédito "Pjal Ya Kac' Tic" ("We Work Together")	
(1983) Unión de Crédito "Pajal"	
(1983) Unión de Uniones	
(1988) UU-Aric Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo	
North (Simojovel, Huitiupán, Sabanilla and El Bosque)	
Comité Central Huitihuapan (1974)	Community Union to free imprisoned peasants
(1980) Sindicato de Obreros Agrícolas	
(1982) First Regional Congress of the CIOAC (Workers and Indians)	Labor and peasant organization
(1983) Unión de Crédito del Sindicato (Achieved title certification to 16 ejidos in 1987)	Credit Union of a Workers Union
Central (Venustiano Carranza)	
Casa del Pueblo "Venustiano Carranza" (1972-1975) (The Movement of the People's House)	Peasant Organization
(1980) Coordinadora Provisional de Chiapas	Peasant Organization affiliated with national movement
(1982) Organización Emiliano Zapata (OCEZ)	Broadest and most combative state peasant organization
(1988) OCEZ-FNDP central zone of OCEZ	
OCEZ-CNPA north zone of OCEZ	

Source: Thomas Benjamin, *A Rich Land A Poor People*: *Politics and Society in Modern Chiapas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996)

The FLN and Activist Groups in Chiapas: The Armed and Clandestine Front

The year 1969 marked the formation of a new guerrilla group in Mexico, Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional—FLN (National Liberation Forces). Unlike other guerilla groups, the FLN refused to rob banks or use kidnapping as a means to obtain funding. In the fall of 1983, the five main leaders of the FLN arrived in the jungles of Chiapas. Three of the leaders were indigenous, and two were mestizos. (The majority of Mexicans are mestizos.) These three leaders first made contact with the families that lived on the Tierra y Libertad ejido, (Land and Liberty). The families were Chol and Tzotzil Indians who had emigrated from other regions of Chiapas searching for land. In Chiapas, the main leader of the FLN, Germán, trained the other members in jungle guerrilla tactics.[90] Their goal was to bring about a revolution in Mexico, and Chiapas had been chosen as the location to build up an army. Their line of revolutionary thought was Marxist-Leninist, and they worked with peasant and indigenous communities in a discreet fashion.

In 1984, Marcos arrived in the Lacandon jungle. His real name was later revealed to be Rafael Guillén, a 25 year old from the northern city of Tampico, Tamaulipas. He had graduated in philosophy from the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), and later became a professor at the UAM (Autonomous Metropolitan University). While at the UAM he met Silvia Fernández, one of the national leaders of the FLN. Marcos dedicated more and more of his time and energy to the FLN, and later left his teaching position. He participated in the preparation of first aid courses in San Cristóbal, Chiapas, and in the early 1980's he traveled to Nicaragua to coordinate a workshop on communication and design for the Sandinistas, who had just

[90] Germán is a pseudonym. A common practice among many guerrilla groups was to use pseudonyms instead of real names. This was done for security purposes, to protect their identities and to shield their families and friends from government repression.

overthrown the Somoza dictatorship. This experience heightened his excitement about revolutionary work in Mexico.

During October, 1984, reports Tello, indigenous people from Unión de Uniones, (Union of Unions) met with the leaders of the FLN, expressing their grievances and thanking the FLN for its support. The Unión de Uniones had been formed in the fall of 1980, at the heat of the dispute for land in the Lacandon region. It was an umbrella organization consisting of three affiliated groups: Unión de Ejidos Tierra y Libertad, (Union of Land and Liberty Ejidos), Unión de Ejidos Quiptic Ta Lecubtesel, (Union of Let's Unite our Forces to Advance Ejidos), and Unión de Ejidos Lucha Campesina, (Union of Peasant Struggle Ejidos). The Unión de Uniones covered 12 *municipios* and represented the interests of 12,000 families that were settled in 180 communities, all of which were located in *Las Cañadas* region.[91] The Unión de Uniones was accustomed to constant struggle against government officials that wanted to remove them from the land, as well as wealthy ranchers who denied them access to water.

In the midst of despair and social mobilization of indigenous communities, the FLN, and other radical groups saw in Chiapas a potentially strategic region in the building of a revolutionary project in Mexico. Among the radical groups was: Union del Pueblo (Union of the People) a revolutionary group organized by José Maria Ortiz, a Guatemalan intellectual and Hector Zamudio, an economics professor from the Chapingo University (Tello 2000). Union del Pueblo emerged in Mexico after the repressions of 1968 and 1971, and was Union del Pueblo was a clandestine organization that was divided into two subgroups. The first was a "foquista" group which insisted on Che Guevara's revolutionary strategy of starting an armed rebellion and gaining support as the movement advanced; and the second consisted of Maoist supporters who believed in first working to create a process of social and political awareness or *concientización* previous to the

[91] Mexican states are subdivided politically and geographically into *municipios*.

rebellion. In spite of their revolutionary ideas, the dioceses of San Cristobal supported the work of Union del Pueblo, and out of their collaboration and dialogue, *Quiptic Ta Lecubtesel* (United in Our Strength) was founded.

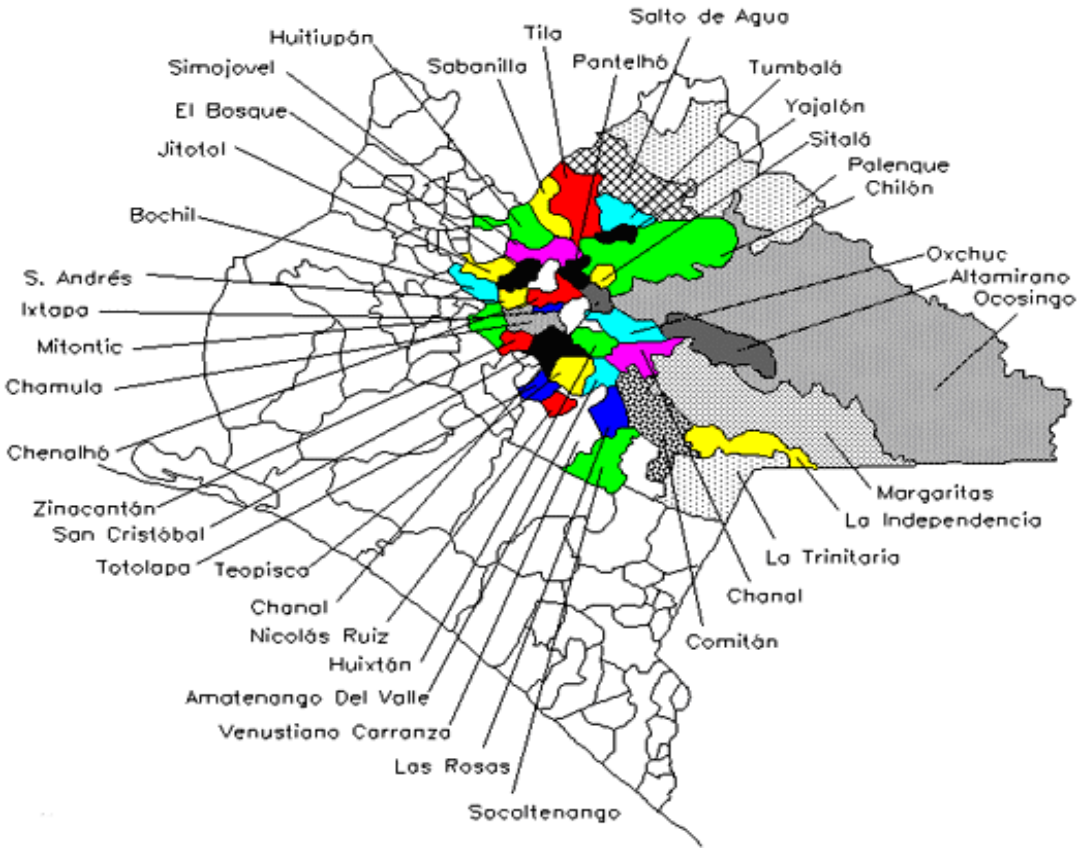
Linea Proletaria (Proletarian line), another group of social activists, arrived in Chiapas in 1977 invited by Bishop Samuel Ruiz. The group's philosophy was Maoist and rejected Lenin's revolutionary approach of destroying social and political structures first and constructing new structures afterwards. Instead the group embraced Mao's philosophy of building first before destroying. The group directed its work toward political education and mobilization. Its vision was to build openly, in daylight, the conditions for a revolutionary change in Mexico. Over time, Linea Proletaria showed that it was a better co-worker with the dioceses than Union del Pueblo. The catechists, however, found themselves divided between a group that emphasized pastoral work and another that emphasized the political work. In the years that followed, and in the midst of polarization, repression by the state and the potential use violence by indigenous communities, the Catholic Church ended up breaking off relations with extremist groups, including the EZLN.[92]

In June of 1992, 15,000 Indians defined themselves as Zapatistas and voted to begin an armed struggle, committing their efforts to sustain the armed struggle by selling livestock to buy arms. According to Tello, the relatively easy commercialization of arms in Texas and California favored the flow of arms to Chiapas. However, it was not until January 1993 that the final plans were drawn when the movement could not be kept clandestine any longer (Tello 2000). Two years before the uprising two events took place in Chiapas that did not gain enough official attention to

[92] The relationship between the Dioceses and the EZLN was made possible thanks to SLOP, an organization led by an elite of catechists that favored the study of historical materialism and the right to armed defense by the indigenous and peasant communities. At the end of the 1980's the SLOP group and the FLN, which later became the EZLN, ended up dividing over the issue of the use of arms. While SLOP supported the use of arms for self defense, the EZLN saw no other option than an armed uprising. Furthermore, the EZLN leaders, and especially Marcos, did not show respect toward the church and its procedures.

formulate a response to the unfolding crisis in Chiapas. First, in 1992, thousands of demonstrators from Chiapas joined the continental protest of indigenous people against the celebration of the fifth centenary of the "discovery" of the American continent in 1492. This event, which according to Collier (2001) included thousands of protesters, stimulated the emergence of an indigenous rights movement that articulated the collective rights in Chiapas to international movements. Indigenous peoples in Mexico made claims based on documents which declared the rights of minorities previously ratified by Mexico. Secondly, the *Xi Nich* (Ants) massive march from Chiapas to Mexico City carried out in 1992 similarly produced empty results.

Map 2 Areas of Zapatista Uprising January 1, 1994



Source: CIEPAC available from http://www.ciepac.org

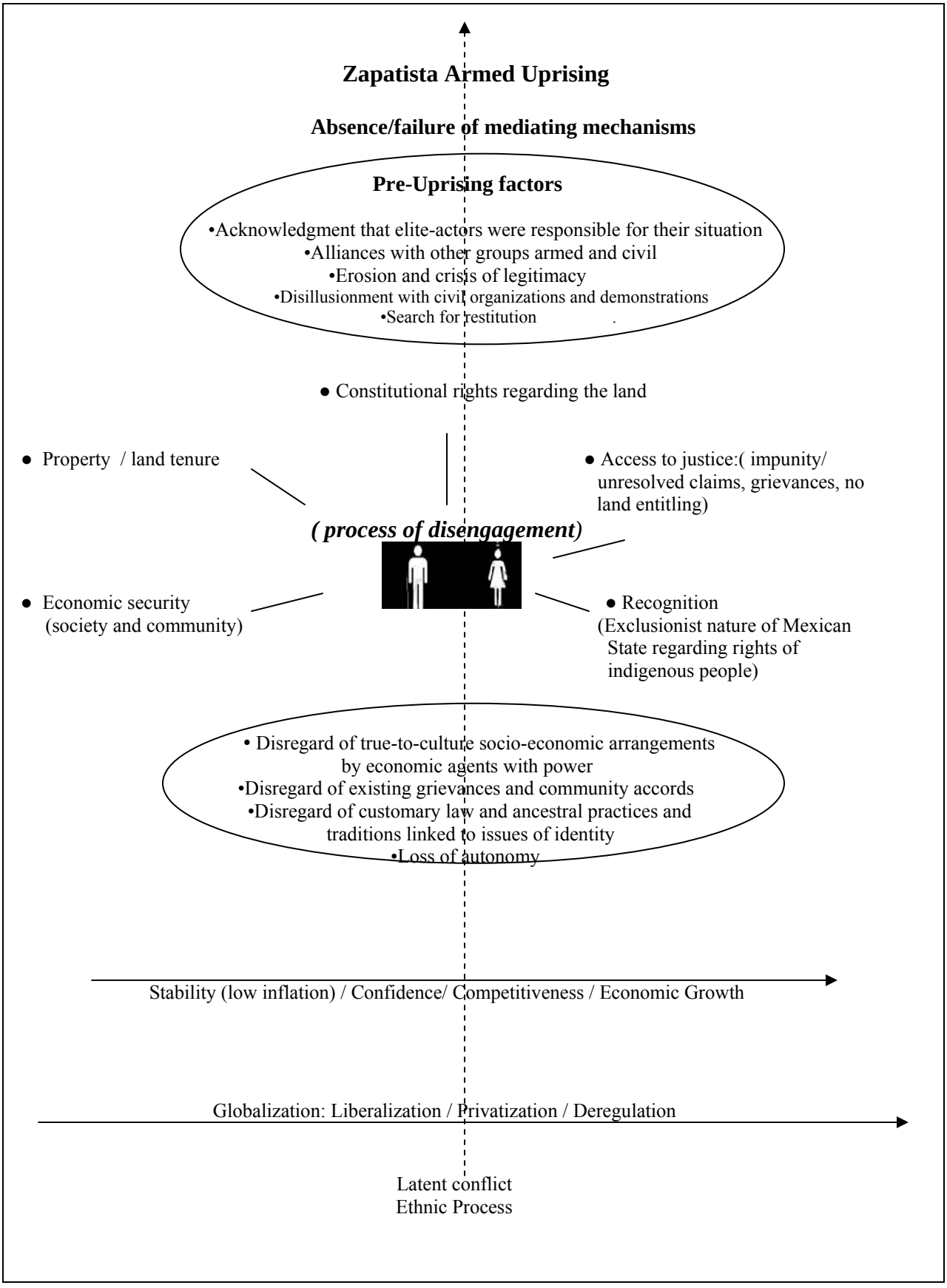
Conclusions

We conclude this section by highlighting four important elements which appeared prior to the Zapatista uprising. First was the emergence of an acute economic and political disengagement for the peasants in Chiapas. Second was the role of the various civil movements in Chiapas which acted as counter balance forces in the face of this acute disengagement. Third was the ending of the existing social contract between the state and peasants. Fourth was the resistance to further government privatization in Chiapas.

We begin discussion of our first element by asserting *that the economic process that dominated Mexico resulted in worsening the multidimensional process of disengagement of the peasants in Chiapas*. As an end result people found themselves without a sense of economic security or dignity, and with no hopes of officially holding property (land). As the confrontation unfolded, no protection from violence seemed available; indigenous people and peasants were not given recognition as legitimate bearers of entitlements; and finally, the access to justice failed. Chapter IV will explore in greater depth the process of disengagement, especially its economic aspect. Overall, this process ruptured the constitutional social contract with peasants and indigenous people, which in turn stimulated the Zapatista uprising.

Secondly, *the Indian movement, the armed movement, the work of the Catholic Church, and the civil rights movements here discussed need to be seen as movements that were "pulling the brake" in the struggle against this disengagement process which extended in all directions.*

Model 9 The Dynamics of Zapatista Rebellion (II)


Zapatista Armed Uprising
Absence/failure of mediating mechanisms
Pre-Uprising factors
•Acknowledgment that elite-actors were responsible for their situation
•Alliances with other groups armed and civil
•Erosion and crisis of legitimacy
•Disillusionment with civil organizations and demonstrations
•Search for restitution
● Constitutional rights regarding the land
● Property / land tenure
● Access to justice:(impunity/ unresolved claims, grievances, no land entitling)
(process of disengagement)
● Economic security (society and community)
● Recognition (Exclusionist nature of Mexican State regarding rights of indigenous people)
• Disregard of true-to-culture socio-economic arrangements by economic agents with power
•Disregard of existing grievances and community accords
•Disregard of customary law and ancestral practices and traditions linked to issues of identity
•Loss of autonomy
Stability (low inflation) / Confidence/ Competitiveness / Economic Growth
Globalization: Liberalization / Privatization / Deregulation
Latent conflict
Ethnic Process

As illustrated by Model 9 the process of globalization, accentuated by the search for a free trade agreement with the U.S and Canada, is also somehow connected, and Chapter IV will address this connection. At the national level however, the possibility of the Mexican state playing a neutralizing role and acting on behalf of its most vulnerable citizens decreased as the state sought to accommodate itself to international expectations. On the other hand, the state took an active and leading role in modifying the constitution, paving the way for the NAFTA agreement. Of course the new economic trends could not occur in a vacuum. The Mexican state retreated from the market but led the constitutional reforms, since the new economic arrangements required a different legal context. Regarding the role of the state within a global context, Hardt and Negri (2001) have argued that states do not necessarily retreat, yielding to global forces. Instead, the nation-states tend to adjust to new roles, finding their place in the new emerging global dynamics of *empire.*[93] In the case of Mexico, the change in the role of the state resulted in an explosion of civil organizations that responded to the economic crisis and later to the social crisis.

From 1930 to 1982 modernization and industrialism dominated the economic map of Mexico, and rural Mexico was thought to benefit as a result of the economic dynamics of industrial centers. The economy was oriented to the erection of economic structures and growth by the exploitation and nationalization of natural resources. This strategy of economic growth which began in the 1930's was called *import substitution* (IS) as it was geared to building the economy from inside instead of depending on exports, and ended in 1982 with a crisis.

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[93] The thesis that Hardt and Negri have proposed for understanding the role of the nation-states in a context of globalization contrasts with the common belief that the presence and role of the nation-states tends to disappear. Hardt and Negri allege that instead of disappearing, the nation-states integrate into a new supra-national structure that consolidates globally; i.e., an Empire. While imperialism was concerned with territories, Empire is concerned with socioeconomic and political order, and global presence.

The economic crisis of 1982 was supposed to be corrected by following a plan of austerity and making sacrifices in order to obtain stability, reduce inflation (from 80.8% in 1983 to 7.1% in 1994), and reestablish confidence and economic growth. Nevertheless, as Goudzwaard has pointed out, developing economies which follow western economies, have in many cases, (for the satisfaction of western financing institutions), adopted an outer-oriented economy. They have striven for growth and competitiveness, using labor and resources in an instrumentalistic way, viewing them only as the means to reach higher aims. In this way the inner-oriented economy (which is focused on caring for resources and the environment, the formation and maintenance of dignifying conditions of labor and local markets), becomes subject to the outer-economy, and eventually is sacrificed; making an economy of caring for labor, resources, and capital unthinkable.[94] If we consider the true-to culture economics introduced at the beginning of this chapter as part of the inner-oriented economy, it can be concluded that *Mexico overlooked an internal economy that mattered to people in favor of the fulfillment of international (external) expectations, ending a pre-existing social contract in order to reach stability. Consequently, the Zapatista uprising can be understood as a movement trying to protect the important elements of an economy of care, (expressed in an economy rooted in culture and oriented mainly to the fulfillment of fundamental needs), from the ruthless effects of an economy oriented toward growth, stability and in general, external matters.* From 1982-1994 this was expressed in terms of deregulation, privatization, balancing public finance, renegotiation of external debt, facilitation of foreign investment and the development of trade agreements.

Therefore, the two scenarios of economic performance, (i.e. competitiveness, reduction of deficit, low inflation, etc.), and the collapsing of the protection of an inner economy, raise the question

[94] See Bob Goudzwaard, "The Culture of Economics at the Turning of the Millennium: Christian Perspectives" in Donald A. Hay and Alan Kreider, *Christians and the Culture of Economics* (University of Wales Press 2001), 153-165.

of whether a type of economic performance which is focused on the fulfillment of global demands can occur without the high probability of armed movements. Contrary to the accepted idea that low economic growth is a reliable indicator of potential intrastate conflict, the case of Chiapas gives evidence that economic indicators of the Mexican economy alone are not reliable indicators of the likelihood of the emergence of armed movements. Moreover, impressive economic recovery data which coexists with a collapsing inner economy can be a warning signal of the radicalization of social and political upheaval. For this reason, we argue that the conditions of the inner economy can tell us more about potential conflicts than can national economic performance.

Additionally, in the case of Chiapas, output-oriented economic policies seemed to have reached three limitations. First, land reform stopped when there was no more land to be distributed. The contradictory presidential decrees can be interpreted not only as incompetent performance on behalf of the government, but also as the limits of building legitimacy by using limited resources such as land. A second limitation was manifested when the process of privatization in Mexico encountered fierce opposition in Chiapas. Finally, privatization of the companies previously owned by the government reached its limits when there were no more companies to be privatized.

The following case in point shows how international creditors did not act in good faith when dealing with Mexico nor did Mexico act on behalf of the majority of Mexicans. In his article entitled “Mexico Took the Bite from Its Creditors”, Norman Bailey, (who was the head of the economic affairs for the National Security Committee of the U.S. in 1982), stated that the biggest mistake of the Mexican government was in accepting the diagnosis of the Mexican crisis given by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, who had argued that the debt crisis of Mexico was an issue of liquidity only and not a problem of more

complexity.[95] Mexico did not act in accordance with the interests of the majorities in Mexico, declared Bailey, nor was it willing to become part of the alliance formed by Brazil and Argentina to negotiate external debt. Bailey affirms that with this decision, Mexico lost ten years of potential development. Although Bailey's analysis did not reflect the complexity of the situation or the tremendous pressure in which the Mexican government found itself, nevertheless his declaration indicates the existence of possible options which the Mexican government may have had. Although we may never know the real possibilities that Mexico had when facing its powerful international creditors (backed by the United States), what we do know is that in the end the negotiations benefited the international creditors and powerful domestic actors, while simultaneously hurting the inner economy.

In 1988 Mexico satisfied for the first time, one of the demands of international creditors--a low level of inflation. However, and not surprisingly, this was accompanied by high levels of poverty and a social crisis. Between 1983 and 1988 real wages dropped 7% annually (Lustig and Székely 1997), as the high cost of maintaining a low inflation rate brought on economic disadvantages. The strong desire for a low rate of inflation in spite of the resulting tremendous costs is still easily seen in the economy[96]. Currently, the World Bank still defines Mexico's lack of competitiveness as a situation created by Mexico's own weak financial system, and low productivity in agriculture.[97] We may ask then, how is it possible to achieve the high productivity and

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[95] See Rossana Fuentes Berán "Mexico mordió el anzuelo de los acreedores en 1982: Bailey" *El Financiero*, 20 de agosto de 1992, cited *in* José Luis Calva, *El Modelo liberal mexicano: costos, vulnerabilidad, alternativas* (México D. F, 1995), 143.

[96] An example is the current situation in the auto market, which has shown low inflation throughout 2004. An economic study sponsored by the Mexican Legislative Chamber of Representatives found that the auto market showed an unprecedented growth in 2004 due to its low prices. However, 60% of the autos sold were imported. The study concluded that it did not make any sense for Mexico to use foreign exchange to subsidize imports and sacrifice national production (which had dropped 20% by the first half of the year), for the sake of maintaining a low inflation rate in that market. *La Jornada,* 1 March, 2005

[97] See Marcelo M. Giugale, "A Comprehensive Development Agenda for the New Era: Synthesis", in Marcelo Giugale, Edit., *Mexico: A Comprehensive Development Agenda for the New Era* (Washington D.C: The World Bank 2000)

competitiveness expected by international institutions, when the nature of the subsistence economies in southern Mexico is one of low productivity and where the purpose of production is for self-consumption, the avoidance of famine and ultimately the survival of communities? Is it wise to attempt the removal of rural workers and place them in the market economy for the sake of competitiveness? Most of all, is it possible to implement economic policies in accordance with the global process without stimulating armed movements in southern Mexico?

APPENDIX

Table 6: Three Hypotheses on the Indigenous Population of the Americas in 1492
(figures in millions)

"Overstated" Thesis	"Intermediate" Thesis	"Understated" Thesis
Dobyns 90 a 112	Denevan 57	Stewart 15.5
Cook y Borah 100	Sapper 40 a 50	Rosenblat 13.3
	Rivet 40 a 45	Kroeber 8.4

Reduction of the Indian Population in Central Mexico
(figures in millions)

According to Cook and Borah:	1492 1523 1548 1568 1580 1595 1605	25.3 16.8 6.3 2.6 1.9 1.3 1.0
According to Rosenblat	1492 1570 1650	4.5 3.5 3.4

Sources: Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz, et.al., *La Población de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Ed.Paidos, 1968), 36, Angel Rosenblat, *La Población indígena y el mestizaje en América*, *tomo 1*, (Buenos Aires: Ed. Nova, 1954), 59-88,102. Sherburne, F. Cook Woodrow Borah, *Ensayos sobre la historia de la población, México y el Caribe*. (Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1981), 34. Available from http/www.puc.cl/sw_educ/historia/America/html

BOX 4 The Indian Movement: Declarations and International Agreements

In December 1981 specialists and indigenous leaders met in Costa Rica for the International Congress on Ethnocide and *Ethno-Development* in Latin America. At the center of their pronouncements were: the rights of indigenous people to land, autonomy, self-determination and the legitimacy of rebellion due to unrecognized collective rights. The declarations in Costa Rica have roots in many previous declarations and international agreements, such as:

1) The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which affirms among other rights, the fundamental right of individuals to life, freedom and security;

2) The Convention for the Prevention of and Sanctions against Genocide, which condemned acts of violence against ethic, religious or national groups;

3) The Bogota Document, presented by the Organization of American States, affirming the fundamental economic, social and cultural rights of people, without distinction of race, religion, language, etc. The spirit of this document endorsed the right of individuals throughout their different stages of life, to be entitled to a healthy life and a dignifying status. Additionally, this document endorsed the right to work, as well as the right to elementary and higher education;

4) The 107 Resolution in 1957 by the International Labor Organization on Indigenous and Tribal Populations which recognized the indigenous right to the land, the habitat of indigenous people and the integration of indigenous peoples, although it rejected force or coercion as legitimate methods to achieve this integration. This integrationist approach made this declaration highly debated and led to its review in 1990. The revised version became the most advanced document of the rights of Indian populations regarding land and cultural rights, and though it did not provide certainty regarding its application by the different countries nor a mechanism of accountability, it was rectified by 15 countries in the hemisphere, including Mexico;

5) The United Nations convention against discrimination in education of 1960, which approved the right of minority groups to educate and be educated in their own language, to establish or maintain schools and have access to professional fields, such as teaching;

6) The 1965 international resolution to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, which was rectified by 27 countries;

7) The 1966 international agreement on economic, social and cultural rights, which differed from other documents on human rights in that this document stated the right of all people on the planet to be self-determinant and have the right to utilize and enjoy their natural resources and wealth;

8) The Buenos Aires Protocol in 1967, which endorsed the Bogota document and the 1976 Universal Declaration for the Rights of the People. Sponsored by the Lelio Basso Foundation, this document affirmed respect for identity, traditions, language and culture, opposing discrimination;

9) The 1997 NGO's convention held in Switzerland on Discrimination against Indigenous Minorities in America; and

10) The 1982 San José recommendation to the UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), to make indigenous languages official, to let Indians educate their own people with the support of the state, to support indigenous peoples by negotiating with the member states, to exercise the rights to land and natural resources, the active inclusion of minorities and the need to extend access to the means of communication.

Box 6 Main Socio-Economic Events and Their Effects in Chiapas

Global:	National	Two Communities in Chiapas: Zinacantán and Chamula
		Population growth / demands for more land than the *ejidos* previously given
Oil crisis 1971, 1973	Mexican government decides to promote drilling and export oil International loans increased Imports of corn grow to 25% in 1980 Crisis 1976-77	"Dutch disease" Sacrificing of the agricultural sector for the benefit of industry Decline of investment in agriculture Increase of immigration to industrial centers Explosion of independent organizations
Prices of oil declined 1982 IMF recovery programs	Debt crisis Structural Adjustment Programs	Recession / Decline in construction jobs Peasants return home / Social differentiation between those who made money and those who did not Trucking business flourishes
	End of the import substitution model of growth Neoliberalism phase begins Subsidies are eliminated IMECAFE dismantled (1988)	Conflict and confrontations arise between rich and poor Those who had nothing initiated marches to demand assistance, land or the support to work it, but resources to keep traveling to demand and demonstrate were exhausted Repression by state government / Impunity increases
	International price of coffee drops (1989)	Fertilizing methods require less labor Indigenous / Peasant system of cooperation becomes apparently unnecessary Unemployment increases. Money for fertilizers dries up More work required merely to obtain only food Women take multi-task jobs Strategies of poor weaken Disillusionment with peasant organizations' efficacy in negotiating with the governrnent Incomes drop and debts due to loans for coffee production skyrocket out of control Banks take over lands and other collateral Peasants withdraw from civil credit and loan organizations and join the Zapatista cause
	Government land reform	Contradictory and corrupted federal initiatives to grant land for the benefit of lumber companies Agrarian conflicts
	Electoral Fraud	Fraudulent 1988 presidential elections reinforce that the system is based on political affiliation Legal assistance, education, right to the land, and access to other resources is based on political affiliation only The state government issues modifications to the state constitution (Articles 13, 120 and 336) to deal with "unruly crowds, demonstrators that disrupt public order" Threats against private property Zinacatán can no longer be ruled by its indigenous, pluralistic, customary law; but by a magistrate appointed by the governor
	Human Rights Violations Chiapas second in nation	Human rights abuses Chiapas' governor Patrocinio Gonzales imprisions 2015 indigenous people between 1989 and 1992 The following interim governor, Elmer Setzer, imprisions 282 in 1993 Amnesty International denounces levels of impunity Loss of legitimacy

(Box 6 continued)

Pre-NAFTA reforms	Reform of Article 27 of the Constitution	Land to no longer be granted, nor protected from market forces Ejidos previously given were subject to market forces People wait years to obtain legal possession of the land or simply give up Failure of entitlement to the communal land End of right to subsistence People join the Zapatista movement
NAFTA agreement signed	Zapatista uprising 1994 crisis	Militarization / Repression Human rights violations Displacement of communities

The following assumptions are consistent with IMF principles. According to the IMF, the economic problems of Mexico resided in:

--a balance of payments problem stemming from an "excessive demand" in the midst of few goods and services, encouraging the growth of imports and consequently, a trade deficit

--an excessive demand that triggered high prices for the few goods available

--high inflation impacting the balance of payments since domestic prices may be higher than international prices and imports result attractive to national consumers, creating a deficit

--the erosion of currency value due to inflation; for example, in the event that inflation forces domestic prices for shoes to increase, in order to stay competitive with international prices, a devaluation was required to lower shoe prices and correct "price distortions"

--over-valuation of domestic currency encourages capital flight, since due to economic uncertainty, peso holders will seek the conversion of pesos to dollars and take the money out of the country

--uncertainty and instability exacerbates foreign investors' lack of confidence

--inflation benefits investors that play the financial arena well, but hits the lower classes hardest

Since 1982, the Mexican economy has rested on economic policies contained in the "letters of intent" signed before the IMF and World Bank during the 1980's. The economic policies were designed to achieve:

a) promotion and protection of free markets, deemed vital for development and a healthy economy

b) the reduction of public expenditure necessary for the sake of improved financial status

c) elimination of food and transportation subsidies, indispensable for reduction in the budget deficit

d) a cutback in the size of government, selling publicly owned companies that tend to be inefficient and placing them on the market to foster competition

e) an economy open to foreign investment and protection as well as guaranties of confidence to capital flows from outside

f) reduction of the money supply

g) the establishment of a fixed and simple exchange rate to facilitate the flow of foreign currency

h) a decrease in government intervention

i) an aggressive privatization process of all sectors of the economy, including the most dynamic and vital ones

J) that all of the above will move the economy toward a single and integrated global economy where merchandise will flow freely across borders and

k) competition will eventually benefit everyone, and

l) becoming internationally competitive is a goal that surpasses local companies' goals for achieving self-sufficiency

In 1982, when Mexico declared bankruptcy, the IMF's consistent warning was that defaulting would eliminate Mexico's ability to borrow in the future, and that Mexico's lack of responsibility to its international agreements would be followed by a deeper crisis. The IMF pressed for the reduction of demand, and of imports, devaluation, export promotion and eventually the creation of a trade surplus to pay the debt. However, these policies left Mexico with a recession, high inflation and low international reserves.

Economists in Mexico expressed their puzzlement that economic policies, such as those that fostered production in order to increase the supply of a few goods to match high demands, were not considered. Instead, the Fund pressured to cut consumer spending by having high interest rates limit credit and discourage capital flight, to lower government spending and increase government revenue through raising prices for consumers of government utilities.

These policies were followed until 1994, when the Mexican economy experienced a second crisis. The 1994 crisis can be explained as a continuation of the crisis of 1982, since the Mexican economy was experiencing the same organic problems. Economic analysts have pointed out that since 1982, the economy has evidenced the following problems:

a) That the economic model implemented since 1982 did not create an endogenous sustainability, levels of productivity, internal savings nor adjustments for the external sector. Economic policies were aimed at reducing inflation and correcting a distortion of prices. These policies, however, were not accompanied by complementary policies that would foster the national industry's ability to compete against foreign companies nor lower interest rates for credit to modernize or expand the national industry.

b) The foreign investment that entered the economy during this period (1982-1994) was mainly speculative capital that did not enter the production sector, and consequently the expected benefit for the modernization of the national industry did not occur.

(Continued)

c) The process of privatization came to an end in 1994, and no more state-owned companies could be sold.

The economy did not show significant growth approaching 1994. The manufacturing sector showed negative figures along with a negative current balance and a higher level of external indebtedness. The status of the economy did not offer guaranties for repayments of government assets, or attractive conditions for investment. External capital stopped flowing in and consequently speculative earnings stopped. This was followed by massive capital flight, in search of low-risk markets, and internally, an increase of dollar-indexed government assets by domestic holders. The government did not have policies in place regarding the regulation of foreign capital, in part because the Mexican government was more concerned about credibility with international institutions than with the wellbeing of the Mexican people. Simply speaking, Mexico was selling its house to pay the credit card, refusing to address the underlying causes and the fragility of the economy.

Sources: Huerta, Arturo "La Crisis del neoliberalismo mexicano" in *Problemas del Desarrollo: Revista Latinoamericana de Economía* Mexico (April-June 1995).
John Saxe- Fernandez, "Plan de choque y la dialéctica entre macrorregionalización y microrregionalizacón" en *Problemas del desarrollo: Revista Latinoamericana de Economía* Mexico (July-September 1995)

Box 8 Grievances in Chiapas

. . . The peasant, the Indian, works hard, and is always exploited, selling his products cheap and buying things high, so we leave our money and our work with the merchant.
. . . For us, merchants and monopolists are "A GREAT PLAGUE."
. . . Exploitation in commerce goes from little things to big and expensive things. We are always at a disadvantage.
. . . "Intermediaries" snatch our products, in markets and on the road, and pay what they want.
. . . The pig dealers trick us, for example, stuffing their pigs with grain [like "watering the stock," to put false weight on them]. . .
. . . And when we buy products or sell them, often they trick us with weights and measures.
. . . We know there are very powerful gentlemen who take advantage and are getting very rich from stealing or paying very low prices for products of high price.
. . . Here we want to DENOUNCE the coffee dealers, the timber dealers in Los Altos (and in the jungle), the cattle dealers. For example, with timber, they trick us, and because the community does not know how to defend itself or know its rights, they exploit it. They bribe the ejido commissioners. Before, for a mahogany tree that costs $10,000 [pesos] or more they paid us $25 or $50. Now they do not pay us anything anymore, and they haul timber out day and night in big trucks.
. . . The buyers and sellers set prices at their whim. So, for example, the corn we sell at 50 centavos, we buy at 3 pesos.
. . . The sale of liquor and beer is a great source of exploitation…….
. . . The loans in money are at high interest. For example, loans at 100% interest in seven months.

Some of Grievances related to Education

. . . It is a very bad system of education. Even the teaching is bad.
. . . What they teach is of no use for the improvement of the community.
. . . They only teach how to read and write, which the children soon forget, but they learn nothing about how to make a living.
. . . It is an education that prepares the children for exploitation.
. . . Those who finish the sixth year know nothing; they become exploiters following the example of their teachers.
. . . The school is against our customs, and makes people leave.
. . . It does not teach anything about improvement of the land, agriculture, care of animals, agrarian law, or medicine.
. . . There is a lack of schools.
. . . Schooling is incomplete. For example, there is a school that has been going for 38 years, and no one has finished the primary grades.
. . . We see that schooling only really serves the ladinos.
. . . Most of the teachers and INI agents give a bad example…..
. . . . . Ladino teachers . . . think they are superior.
. . There is a group of Tzeltal teachers who work on their own private initiative. The government does not support them. They are good, but they need training. They have asked for positions in INI, but are not given them . . .

Some Grievances related to Health

. . . We suffer many diseases and epidemics.
. . . There are many zones where there is a lot of tuberculosis, intestinal diseases, hemorrhages, rheumatism.
. . . The reasons why we suffer this are: malnutrition and poverty; lack of land; lack of knowledge about domestic hygiene, water, food; lack of shelter; rain.
. . . Our living conditions are conditions of disease.
. . . The vaccination campaigns do not get to us. Or when they do, instead of giving us the prescribed triple vaccination, they give us only one shot.
. . . The lack of roads means that many vaccinations or medicines never get here.
. . . Only in some places are there big clinics. In most places there are none.
. . . For example, there is not a single hospital in the entire Chol zone, or in Tila, Sabanilla, Tumbalá. Because of the isolation in which we live, only those who have money can get out to be cured; the others have to die from their disease.
. . . Where there are health centers, neither the doctors nor the nurses know how to go into the country. We want there to be more doctors, but for them to see people in their homes.
. . . In the health centers we suffer discrimination; it is that they do not know how to speak our language.
. . . Over the radio they tell us about hygiene and health, but our conditions do not improve just because of what the radio says.. . . . . Indians have more trust in Indian medicine than in ladino medicine.

Box 9 1974 Community Accords in Chiapas

Accords: Land

The Land Belongs to Those Who Work It.

1. We all want to solve the problems of land, but we are divided, each for himself, and so we feel we have no strength. We are looking to organize each group so that it will have strength, because union makes strength.
2. We demand that the communal lands taken away from our fathers be returned to us.
3. That the employees of the Agrarian Department effectively resolve pending administrative questions. We demand an end to extortion by engineers and zone chiefs and forestry officers.
4. That the problem of the Tulijá Dam be justly resolved, and that they take us into account.
5. That the minimum wage be paid to Indians who work on fincas and in cities, and that they receive all the benefits that the law provides.
6. That taxes not be imposed on sterile land. That taxes be fair.
7. We demand that to settle our problems the government not send in the army, that problems be settled with the community, not with the army.

Accords: Commerce

Equality and Justice in Prices

1. We want an Indian Market, that is, that we ourselves be the ones who buy and sell, that this be organized in each municipality, starting with hamlets, colonies, and settlements, concentrating produce in our warehouses, so that among ourselves, Tzeltals, Tzotzils, Tojolabals, and Chols, we can sell each other our various products.
2. We want to organize ourselves into cooperatives for selling and producing, to defend ourselves from monopolizers and so that profits do not leave the community.
3. We demand that INMECAFE (the federal coffee-purchasing agency) not sell itself out to monopolizers, that it buy (from us) at guaranteed prices through the representative elected by the community.

Accords: Education

To Renew the Education of Our Children

1. We want Indian teachers to be trained who will teach in our language and our custom, and that they also teach Spanish. We do not want teachers who do not know our language and customs.
2. We want teachers who will respect the communities and their customs. We want them to teach us our rights as citizens. We want the community to be taught its rights.
We want them to commit themselves to the service of the community.
3. We want our communities themselves to organize themselves better, that there be a committee independent of the teachers, elected by the community, to watch over the teacher's work.
4. Education and teaching are very necessary, but they should help to improve our human conditions and respond to the needs of the community, in land and animals, social integration, cultivation, tailoring, bricklaying.
5. That there be an Indian newspaper in our four languages (Chol, Tzotzil, Tzetzal, Tojolabal). That the paper be the Indians' and that it serve for our own communication.

Accords: Health

Health is Life

1. We need to organize our community so that we can take care of our health.
2. We want the old medicine not to be lost. It is necessary to know the medicinal plants in order to use them for the good of us all.
3. We ask that there be clinics in the big Indian villages and that they serve the smaller communities with Indian nurses who know both medicines, that of pills, and that of plants.
4. In many of our zones there is tuberculosis. We ask for an effective campaign against tuberculosis.
5. That there be education in health to prevent diseases, and for hygiene, so that the two medicines are not mixed up. (Womack 1999)

Chapter IV

The Political Economy of Exclusion and Failure of Acquirement in the Mexican Context

Following the Great Depression of the 1930s and the period of World War II, poverty became a measured global condition through the use of income levels and per capita income. This approach to poverty and development, although it holds merits in its own right, focuses on individuals whose income is not sufficiently adequate to fulfill their basic human needs in relation to conventional patterns of behavior, and in so doing this approach is restricted and limited. Following this reasoning, poverty is determined by earnings below a set income level only (Sen 1981). Sen, however, has proposed going beyond narrow views of development and the lineal association of development and levels of income, since the reason for obtaining wealth is in order to thereby obtain something else, viz., freedom. According to Sen, human beings are diverse by essence and we cannot draw a line of poverty that can be applied indiscriminately around the world, ignoring the characteristics and personal circumstances of different societies. Therefore, Sen has proposed the capability approach, which defines development as the process of the expansion of the freedoms that people value. Poverty is viewed as the lack of capabilities of people to achieve the freedoms they value the most.

> What capability perspective does in poverty analysis is to enhance the understanding of the nature and causes of poverty and deprivation by shifting primary attention away from *means* (and one particular mean that is usually given exclusive attention, viz., income) to *ends* that people have reason to pursue, and, correspondingly, to the *freedoms* to be able to satisfy these ends (1999:90).

Moreover, this method analyzes the restrictions on reaching sufficient entitlement that enable humans to achieve basic functions in a society. Regarding these conceptions of development and freedom, Sen remarks that the:

> …enhancement of human freedom is both the main object and primary means of development…. The ends and means of development call for placing the perspective of freedom at the center of the stage. The people have to be seen, in this

> perspective, as being actively involved--given the opportunity--in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs. The state and the society have extensive roles in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities. This is a supporting role, rather than one of ready-made delivery. The freedom-centered perspective on the ends and the means of development has some claim to our attention (1999:53).

If the expansion of peoples' capabilities can actually lead to better living conditions for the poor and the enjoyment of more freedoms, then poverty becomes a restriction, an experienced deprivation, an obstacle that keeps people from reaching their aspirations in life. Without denying the importance of income analysis, Sen proposes a departure from viewing poverty as only a matter of income flow. In Sen's broader understanding, poverty consists of the lack of freedom, a loss of people's *entitlement* to live lives that they have reason to value. In consequence, *development* mainly implies the removal of constraints in order to achieve higher levels of freedom.

The achievement of economic development is usually associated with a better quality of life, reduction of poverty, low mortality rates, expansion of life expectancy, etc. The capabilities approach however, insists that these indicators can be achieved through the expansion of people's capabilities. This expansion of capabilities allows individuals to reach alternative functioning combinations, and thereby indirectly move toward economic development. For instance, child mortality has been shown to be correlated to the mother's access to education. In others words, living better and longer lives does not have to be left pending until economic growth is reached and spreads its benefits to society, but rather, instead of being only a final consequence of economic development, the expansion of people's capabilities is also a means of reaching economic development. This is in agreement with Sen's notion of economic development as a *friendly* process,

instead of a process of blood, sweat and tears which only industrialized countries can overcome.

Another important contribution of Sen has been in the area of understanding famines and hunger. Based on individual entitlements, Sen's analysis states that famines, (contrary to the commonly held belief that famines are caused exclusively by the lack of food or its distribution), are related to *entitlement failure*s. Entitlements are defined by Sen as the commodities over which one can establish ownership which enable an individual to have access to food (Sen 1999). Three factors together make up what Sen calls the basket of entitlements. The first is the endowment or the ownership of the person over productive resources, (labor, land, other resources), that have a price on the market. The second factor is the condition of production possibilities available thanks to changes in technology or knowledge, which are geared to reaching higher levels of food production or higher wages. The majority of humanity however, earns wages in order to buy food. Thirdly, the exchange conditions and prices for the exchanged goods in a given economy can determine whether or not the holder of an entitlement can made a successful transaction, (e.g., labor for food). During a crisis, as expected, markets and their mechanisms of exchange can be altered drastically and can cause a failure in the ability of individuals to obtain necessary goods. Entitlement failure can be followed by starvation in a poor country, where the entitlement system is geared to obtaining vital goods for survival. For instance, unemployment, the prices of non-food goods, and the level of wages play a vital role and can determine the ability of laborers and workers to obtain food. Therefore, Sen concludes that starvation can occur without a decline in the production of food and surprisingly in the mists of greater food availability, as occurred in Bangladesh in 1973.

Sen makes an important distinction between commodities or goods, and capabilities. To clarify this distinction, he provides the following illustration. An owner of a bicycle, (a mode of transportation), has the capability of getting around and also of

sometimes finding pleasure through the use of his/her bicycle. However, if the owner happens to be a severely disabled person, owning a bicycle will not make a difference in her/his level of freedom. Amartya Sen states that while commodity ownership can bring satisfaction to the possessor, it does not provide any information about what the individual can do, about his/her capability or *ability* to achieve or *acquire*. Sen concludes that the essence of the standard of living does not reside in commodity ownership, or in the characteristics of the commodity, but rather in the ability of people to achieve, to alter or improve society or to live better lives. This *freedom to acquire*, and not the mere act of achieving in owning or obtaining goods, is fundamental to Sen's proposal. Consequently, the GDP studies of any country can measure commodities, but they fail to take into account the standard of living, the overall well-being of people, levels of mortality, undernourishment, etc. Development should consist, Sen concludes, of *enhancing capabilities* rather than merely increasing commodities.

Having briefly defined Sen's methodology, we now turn to the region in rebellion from the perspective of entitlements. First, we take a closer look at the region through the lenses of *marginalization* and *human development* (A). Second, we focus specifically on communities in the region and analyze *the system of entitlements* during the period between 1982 and 1994 (B). In the final section we will search for the reasons for *acquirement failure* and possible links to the uprising of 1994 in Chiapas (C).

A. Marginalization and Human Development

In Mexico the *Indices de marginación 2000*, published by CONAPO (National Population Institute) defines marginalization as a structural phenomenon that springs from historical patterns of development and reveals itself in two aspects. The first is the difficulty of spreading technical progress in all the productive

areas of the economy, and in excluding social groups from the process and the benefits of development. The second aspect is multidimensional in nature. On one hand it represents a precarious structural system of opportunities for citizens, families and communities, exposing them to deprivations, risks and vulnerability beyond their personal, family or community control (Conapo 2001). Additionally, the intensity and characteristics vary dependant on demographic and geographic particulars of the region. Understanding the context and differences, the study argues, can help to determine region-specific alternatives and prioritize policies. Since poverty, a complex phenomenon, is not only influenced by income but also by other variables such as health, geographical circumstances, physical limitations, cultural differences, exclusion of markets and their benefits, etc., Conapo has developed an index of marginalization based on the kind of un-freedoms or restrictions that Mexicans experience. It identifies nine types of exclusions, and evaluates their intensity by measuring the population percentage that does not participate in the fulfillment of basic needs. Table 9 presents a summary of concepts and chosen indicators.

Table 9 Measuring Marginality

Concept of Marginalization	Socio-economic Dimensions	Forms of Exclusion	Tool to measure the Intensity of Exclusion	Index of Marginalization
A multiple structural phenomenon that evaluates the dimensions and intensity of the forms of exclusion from the process of development and enjoyment of its benefits	***1. Education***	**a) Illiterate population**	**Percentage of the population aged 15 or above who are illiterate**	**Overall Intensity of Socio-Economic Marginalization**
		b) Percentage of population without elementary school	**Percentage of the population aged 15 or above without elementary education**	
	2. Housing	**a) Houses without potable water**	**-Percentage of the population living without potable water**	
		b) Houses without plumbing	**-Percentage of population living without plumbing**	
		c) Houses with dirt floor	**-Percentage of population with dirt floors**	
		d) Houses without electricity	**-Percentage of population living without electricity**	
		e) houses with some level of over-crowding	**-Percentage of population living with some level of overcrowding**	
	3. Income	**a) Population that receives two minimum wages**	**-Percentage of population receiving two minimum wages**	
	4. **Population Distribution**	**a) Localities with less than 5000 inhabitants**	**-Percentage of the population living in towns with less than 5000 inhabitants**	

Source: Consejo Nacional de Población, *Indices de Marginación 2000* (México: CONAPO, 2001)

The lack of access to education represents a barrier for people to be able to reach what they value most in life, and more importantly, to have the basis to articulate their own perspectives about their environment, culture and their own needs. Therefore, the absence of opportunity to obtain education necessarily becomes a form of exclusion.[98] The novelty of this procedure is that the marginalization index, whose calculations are based on these nine indicators, allows for a differentiation of regions, states and *municipios*[99] according to the intensity of depravation of these nine basic needs.

[98] Two indexes are used to reveal the level of exclusion in the area of education. The first is the illiteracy index, which measures the percentage of the illiterate population 15 years or older; the second measures the percentage of the population without elementary education. The methodology used in this study is briefly explained here by the following: according to the 2000 census, which offered data distributed already by states regions and counties, the study focused on *the illiteracy condition*. The illiteracy population is understood as the section of the population that is unable to read or write a message or note. To evaluate the illiteracy condition in general two indexes are used. First, the illiteracy index is calculated by the following formula:

$$I= (Pi/P15\text{-}NE)x100$$

Pi represents the population that is illiterate; P15, the population 15 years and older; and NE, the population 15 years and older with unspecified illiteracy condition. A second index, similar to the previous one, is used to measure the population with incomplete elementary school education.

[99] Mexican states are subdivided politically and geographically into *municipios*.

Map 2 Mexico: Levels of Marginality 2000



Source: Consejo Nacional de Población, *Indices de marginación 2000* (México: CONAPO, 2001)

In Map 2, the marginalization index reveals that the states with very high marginalization levels in the year 2000 were the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Veracruz and Hidalgo; in which 20% of the total population lived. This means that a total of 19.6 million people that resided in these five states experienced high levels of deprivation. A majority of people in the region, 61%, lived in disperse and isolated towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants. Regarding wages, the study showed that 76% of the employed population made less than two Mexican minimum wages or between $4-$7 U.S. dollars. In general, the three southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero showed similar figures, while the state of Guerrero contained the highest percentage (35%) of people living without sanitation services or a toilet. It is also interesting to note that only four states showed very low indexes of marginalization, and among them, the Federal District, (the capital

of Mexico, more commonly known as Mexico City), showed the lowest index.

To appreciate indigenous living conditions in Mexico, the study took a survey of municipios. These municipios were divided by a) *indigenous* municipios where 70% of inhabitants 5 years and older spoke an indigenous language, b) *predominantly indigenous* where 40 to 70% of the population five years and older spoke an indigenous language, c) *with a strong indigenous presence* where 10 to 40% percent of inhabitants spoke an indigenous language and d) *other municipios* where less than 10% spoke an indigenous language. These results are reflected in Table 10. According to this data, 812 municipios (346+186+280), fell within the classification of a, b or c. Of these, 346 were indigenous municipios, of which 209 had very high levels of marginalization and 133 had high levels of marginalization. Only four of these municipios showed moderate levels of marginalization.

Looking at these facts from a national perspective, we can observe that of the 386 municipios classified as municipios with very high levels of marginalization in 2000 in Mexico, 309 (209+57+43) or 80% were indigenous, predominantly indigenous or had a strong indigenous presence. Also, of the 906 municipios classified as having a high level of marginalization, 698 (77%) were municipios with some degree of indigenous population. Graph 5 shows the levels of marginality of municipios which have an indigenous presence. In Mexico to be part of indigenous communities is to live in marginalization. The intensity of marginalization decreases as the percentage of the indigenous population represented in these municipios decreases. For example, while the 209 (60%) municipios of the 346 indigenous communities were classified with very high marginalization, only 43 (15%) of the 280 municipios with strong indigenous presence were classified under very high marginalization, and only 77 (4.7%) of 1630 municipios that contained less than 10% of indigenous population were classified under very high levels of marginalization (see Table 10).

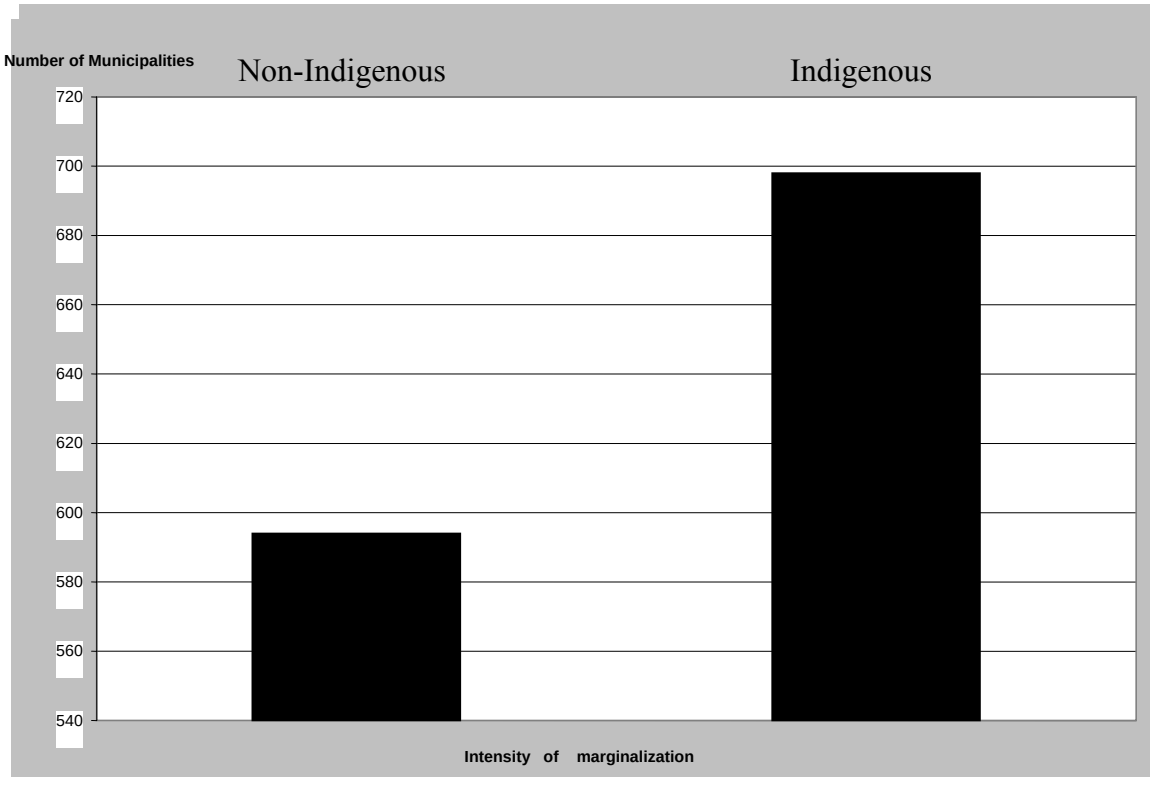
Table 10

Municipios with Indigenous Presence and Levels of Marginalization 2000

Municipios	Total	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Other
Total	2 443	386	906	486	417	----
Indigenous	346	209 (60%)	133	4	-	
Predominantly Indigenous	186	57 (31%)	106	18	3	
With SIP	280	43 (15%)	150	62	20	
Others	1 630	77 (4.7%)	517	402	394	

Source: Elaborated by the author based on *Indice de marginación 2000*

Graph 5 Total Number of Municipios with High and Very High Levels of Marginalization



Source: Elaborated by author based on *Indice de marginación* 2000

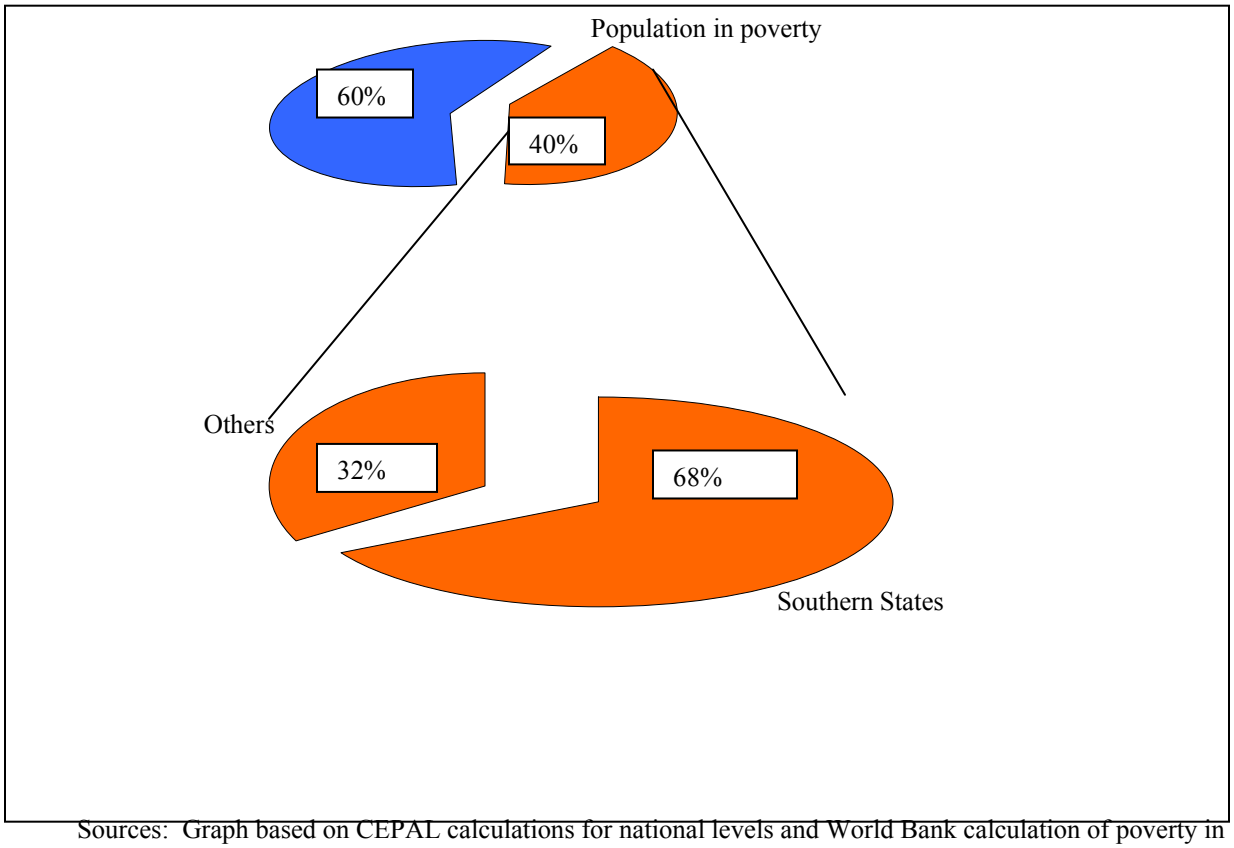
In terms of numbers, we can say that 10 million people (386 communities), located mostly in southern Mexico experienced high or very high levels of marginalization. Additionally, another 8 million experienced a moderate level of marginalization. It can be concluded that in 2000, 18 million Mexicans lived under varying levels of precarious conditions or were deprived of the means and opportunities to function and achieve their goals in life. It is not surprising to find that the majority of these municipios with a high or very high level of marginalization (1,292) are found in southern Mexico (see Table 9). Oaxaca has an unusually high number of municipios—458; Puebla has 153, Veracruz 146, Chiapas 109 and Guerrero 67.

Table 11 Municipios by States, According to High and Very High Levels of Marginalization, 2000

	Total	Very High	High
	1,292	386	906
Oaxaca	458	182	276
Puebla	153	35	118
Veracruz	146	49	97
Chiapas	109	44	65
Guerrero	67	30	37
Others	359	46	313

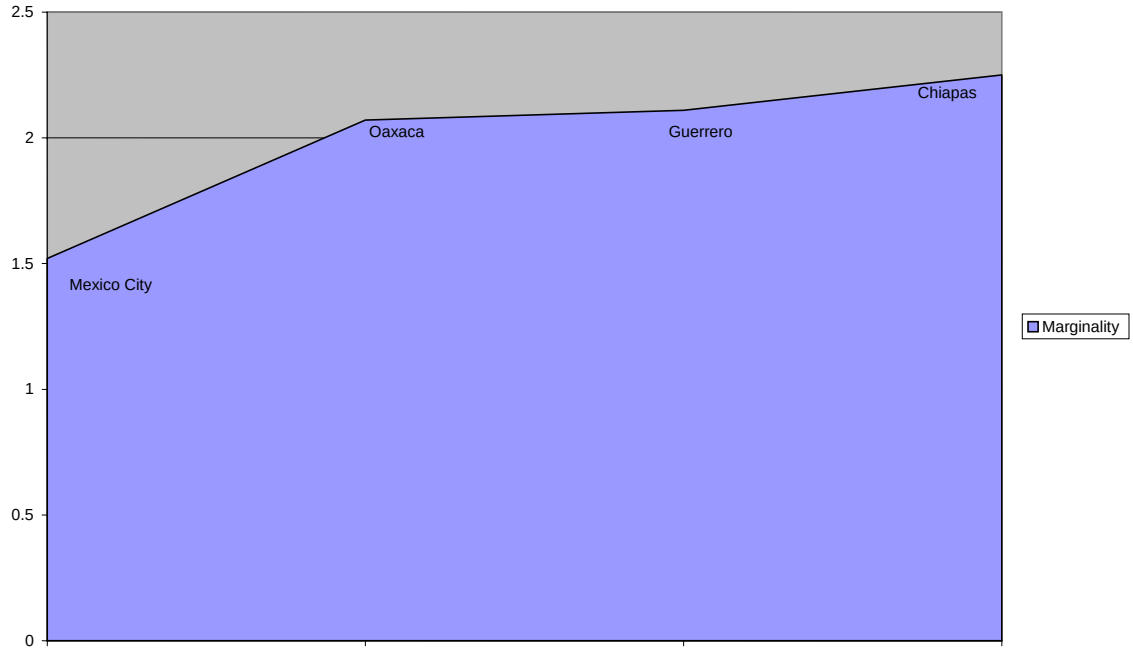
Source: Elaborated by author, based on *Indice de marginación 2000*

Graph 6: Share of Population in (Income) Poverty in Southern States (Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero) in Relation to the National Level



Sources: Graph based on CEPAL calculations for national levels and World Bank calculation of poverty in southern states. See Damián, Araceli and Julio Boltvinik ,"Evolución y características de la pobreza en México". *Comercio Exterior*, 53, no 6, (June 2003), and Quentin Wodon, Gladis López-Acevedo, "Poverty in Mexico's Southern States" (World Bank 2004) available from http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/LAC/LAC.nsf/ECADocbyUnid/541D538865DA825A85256DC5007A7BC8?Opendocument

Graph 7 Marginalization Index and State Ranking for Southern States



Source: Elaborated by author, based on *Indice de marginación 2000*

Graph 6 reports on the share of total poverty of the southern states. It is important to remember that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and not just the absence of income. Graph 7 reveals that Chiapas is the state with the highest level of marginality, with Guerrero and Oaxaca ranked as second and third respectively. In the case of Chiapas, the illiteracy rate was 50%. Also, 23% of the population 15 years and older did not finish elementary school; one in five of the people in this state lived without sewage or a toilet, 12 in 100 people lived without electricity and one in four did not have drinking water. The study also revealed that four out of ten residents had dirt floors and almost 2 out of every 3 live in inadequate housing. Additionally, 76% of those who make up the active labor force were receiving income equivalent to two minimum wages.[100] Sixty percent of the population lived in towns

[100] The minimum wage for Chiapas and Oaxaca in 2000 was $32.70 (pesos). The exchange rate was $9.49 (pesos) per U.S. dollar.

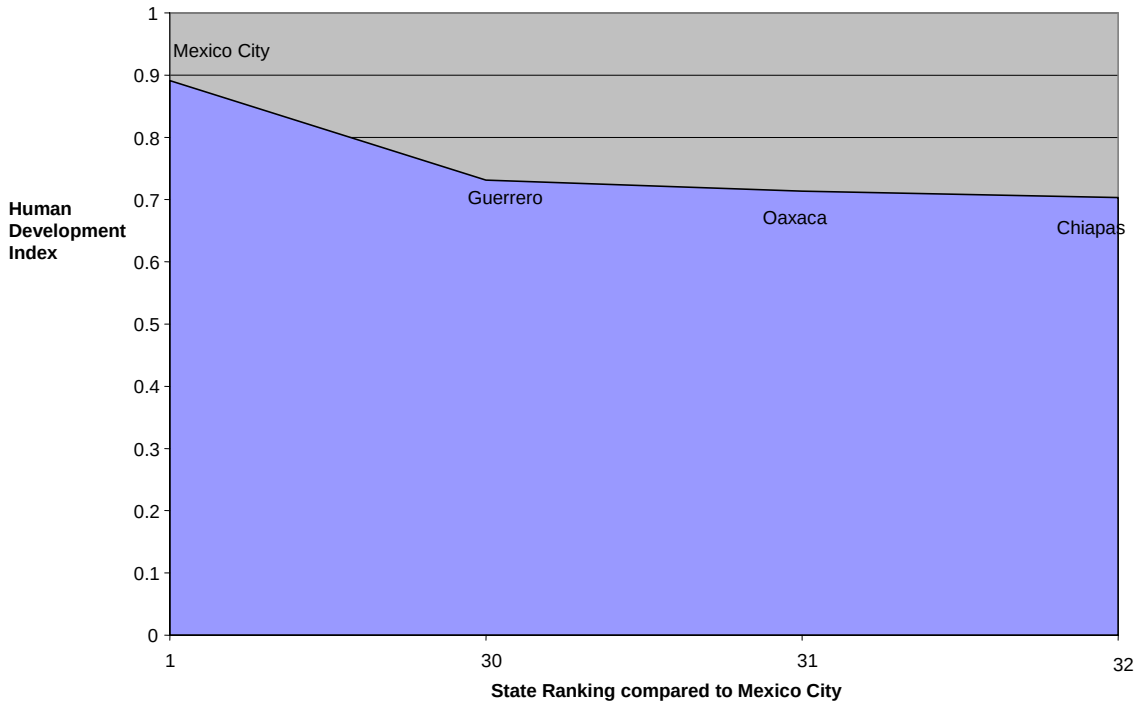
that were dispersed and isolated with less than 5000 habitants. The situation in the state of Chiapas did not vary much from that of Oaxaca and Guerrero. In fact, the population in these three states alone represented 55% of the total population that lived in extreme poverty in 2000.[101]

The 2002 Human Development Index Report of Mexico (HIRM), the first of its kind in Mexico, shed light on the conditions of the region by pointing out existing inequalities in human development in Mexico. The Report incorporates Sen's concept of freedom, which differs from its common use, going beyond that of individual liberties which need to be protected from interference by the state or other actors, including governments. According to the HIRM, individual freedom without the means to fulfill basic human aspirations, such as living a healthy life or avoiding premature death, makes little sense. Human development therefore, focuses on the *enabling conditions in which people live*. The report argues that there are three fundamental capabilities that individuals need to hold in order to wholly fulfill their aspirations. The first is the capability of living a healthy and long life; the second is the acquisition of knowledge valued by the individual and society; and third is the possibility of obtaining the necessary resources to enjoy a respectable standard of living. Consequently, the subject of study lies in *opportunities*, and the indicators chosen in the study to measure development are: life expectancy, literacy rates and school enrollment, and the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This report relies on indexes from previous Human Development World Reports, ranking from high (HDI of 0.800-1), to medium (HDI of 0.500-0.799) and low (HDI of below 0.499).

[101] Quentin Wodon, Gladis Lopez-Acevedo, "Poverty in Mexico's Southern States" (World Bank 2004).

Graph 8: Level of Human Development of Southern States



Source: Elaborated by author and based on the *Informe sobre el desarrollo humano México 2002* (PNUD, 2003)

Graph 8 shows that of the 32 states that exist in Mexico, Chiapas ranked as the state with the lowest human development level. It had the lowest rate of life expectancy, and rate of literacy among those 15 years and older, the lowest overall educational level as well as the lowest GDP per capita. Graph 8 also reflects a drastic picture of inequality within Mexico[102]. Mexico City, which is not a state but rather a federal district, displays a high HDI (0.891), similar to human indexes held by countries such as Hong Kong, Spain, and Italy, while Chiapas has a very low human index similar to El Salvador or Algeria. The HIRM additionally shows that through the years, not much change can be seen in the region. Neither NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), nor

[102] See also INEGI, *Chiapas perfil sociodemográfico*. Censo general de población y vivienda 2000. México D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geográfica e informática.

the dynamic economic growth in the 1990s, have caused a significant positive impact in the region. In the World Bank's opinion, NAFTA did not reach southern Mexico because states such as Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero were not "ready" to reap the benefits of free trade. These states, according to the Bank, suffer from insufficient infrastructure and access to telecommunication services, social instability and poor governance.[103] Yet in disagreement with this conclusion we argue that this so called lack of "readiness" or marginality and inequality do not reflect the total picture. If human development focuses on the *enabling conditions in which people live*, the question then is how these conditions are expressed in the daily hardships of the marginalized communities.

In the following section we offer analytical statements regarding the socio-economic and political situation of three communities in Oaxaca and one in Chiapas, applying the *entitlements* and *capabilities* approach. The three communities in Oaxaca are Tlacochahuaya (Tlaco), Guelavia (Guela) and Santa Ana, and the comminity in Chiapas is Zinancantan.[104] We have chosen 1993 for two reasons, first because of its proximity to the uprising of 1994 in Chiapas, and second, because Oaxaca remains, according to the Human Development Report as the state with the least change in the last 10 years.

[103] Gerardo Esquivel, Daniel Lederman, Miguel Messmacher, Renata Villoro, *Why NAFTA Did Not Reach the South.* (World Bank Group, 2003)

[104] Due to the limitations of this research, a warning is pertinent regarding these remarks, though many similarities can be found between indigenous communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas (such as the socio-economic circumstances highlighted here), many differences can be found in other aspects (language, environment, history, etc.). Therefore these remarks should be taken only as approximations to the real circumstances in the region.

B. Entitlements and Capabilities in Community Life in Southern Mexico[105]

Extended Entitlement System

In most indigenous communities in southern Mexico, individuals tend to participate in the system of cooperation, even though cooperation may result in conflicts, competition and even exploitation (Cohen 1999). We can presume in some sense that Zapotecs in the valley of Oaxaca make economic decisions in ways similar to individuals that live in Mexico City or other regions; yet this comparison cannot be presumed to be identical. Although some similarities can be found, a peasant is in a situation of greater inequality with his/her surroundings, and also has experienced a long-standing condition of deprivation. Individuals in any society seem to hold a particular view of the market economy and shape by cultural values (Cohen 1999). *Choices indeed, seem to be tied to or limited by culture and values.*

Cooperation appears to be rooted in communal identity and not produced by the uncertainty of the context, including that of the market. Rather, cooperative behavior, (though not exclusive of indigenous villages), is passed from parents to children as a part of reality and the successes of cooperation reinforce the value of this daily practice. Cooperation tends to occur on three levels: within the household or family members, between households, and within the community as a whole.

Cooperation assumes that the individual be a person of character. As elsewhere in Mexico, cooperation requires reciprocal aid at different points in time, cooperation is not really free--it comes at a cost, namely the willingness and the sacrifice involved in helping others. Cooperation in these communities, however,

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[105] The empirical data found in this section is from a study carried out by Sanchez Gomez (1995), as well as more recently documented reports on these towns and region.

tends to go beyond calculated costs and benefits, becoming an explicit commitment to the communal life.

Decision-making in an intentional system of cooperation is determined in part by individual conditions but also by collective values, such as the common good, the environment, and survival. Cooperation may become an option for the wealthy, and yet cooperation tends to be chosen even in the midst of wealth; not because it is the only option but because cooperation is perceived as a social investment that can provide help in times of necessity.

Cooperation, as well as other reciprocal transactions, also appears to be part of the spirituality of the people. For example, in Santa Ana, a village in the valley of Oaxaca, the Zapotecs seem to combine together promises to the saints, requests for miracles, and making your needs known to others in the community. One of the villagers explained:

> "I can go like this (walks up to the altar in the church) to the saint to ask for a car or a yunta or whatever I want to have. I take an offering and tell the image that I want to buy this. I might get a figure of what I want and put it in the church that is full of *Milagros*. We call them Milagros *("miracles")*-- they are small figures. If one has a desire, you bring the figure to the altar and leave it there to be guarded and then wait to get it. You have asked and so you have to wait. In the United States you work, you don't need to ask, you don't need to wait. Here too we work hard, but it isn't the same, you make very little. You have to work hard here, and the saints, they help us. (Cohen 1999)

A case can be made therefore that the entitlement system in such communities may not be limited to one's *direct* established ownership of several commodities, but involves extended ownership of commodities, (e.g., communal land and cooperation), which are enhanced by cultural practices and values. More specifically, among the people of this community, the entitlement system features *a prominent dependent relationship of exchange*

with others to maintain relationships and eventually assure survival.

Relations intentionally based on principles of reciprocity imply obligations among members of the community which are fulfilled at different points in time during the life of individuals.[106] We shall refer to this as an *extended entitlement system*.

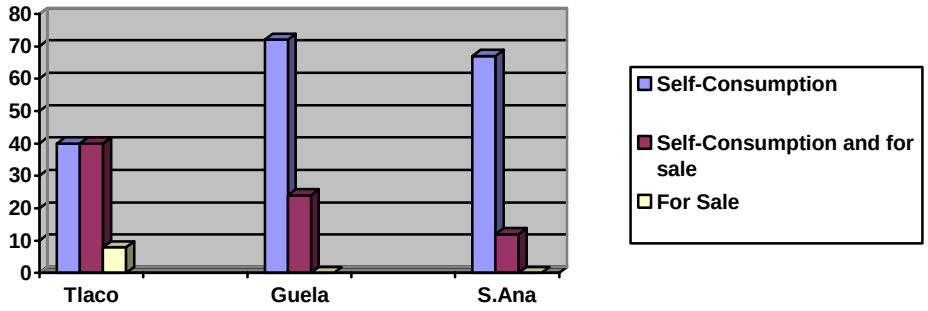
The *expectation* that with the arrival of competition, cooperation will decline and eventually disappear does not seem likely to come true among indigenous communities. In spite of an increasing number of men emigrating to the U.S. and increasing hardships for those that stay, cooperation as a practice to maintain identity survives. Nevertheless, this does not reflect the conclusions of studies of peasant economy in rural Mexico, (mostly Marxist analysis), which contain the expectation of an eventual disappearance of indigenous economic life due to the inevitable destruction of cooperation (Cook 1995). The theoretical assumption behind this expectation is that capitalism everywhere takes a homogenous form, and the social class contradictions of the economic system create enormous labor reserves in the "periphery" which eventually will be absorbed by capital forces at low wages. From this perspective economies of subsistence are assimilated by the forces of capitalism, and the communities' surpluses and profitable economic activities end up in the hands of capitalists which do not live in the community. However, surveys such as the one carried out by Scott Cook and Leigh Binford in the valley of Oaxaca, have shown that small household industries can take on a variety of different forms. *Peasants with capital, for example, participate in the accumulation of capital themselves. They also exploit others and play an active economic role, becoming like the great capitalists unknown to people of the*

[106] Similar to these observations, Jacqueline Vel has found the practice of reciprocity in Lawonda, Sumba (Eastern –Indonesia). She observed that within the system of reciprocity, actual transactions implied not only an item or service to be transferred, but transactions were used to create or maintain a social relationship. Reciprocity creates in this sense, a system of obligations or mutual indebtedness but also a sense of wealth and security and survival in the long run. See Vel, Jaqueline. *The Uma-economy: Indigenous economics and development work in Lawonda, Sumba (Eastern-Indonesia)* (The Netherlands: Grafisch bedrijf, 1994)

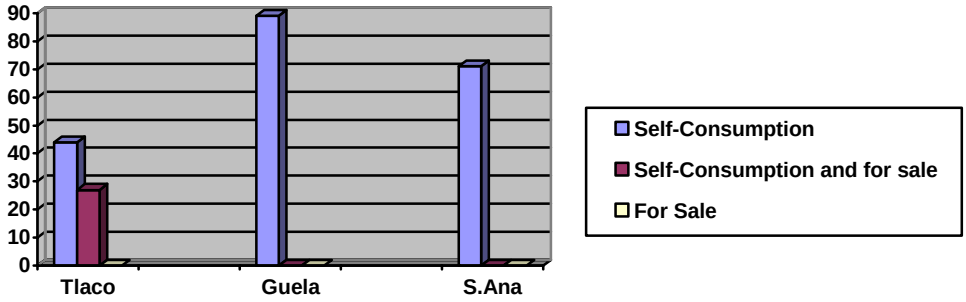
communities. In other words, peasants and indigenous individuals are active economic agents, and within the community cooperation tends to remain a way of preserving their identity.

Now we move to a discussion of other specific economic issues. Household economic activities in the valley of Oaxaca, in general, take two forms. The first is the production of merchandise for consumption without the intention of accumulating capital, and second, agricultural activities. Agricultural practices continue for the simple reason that even though the land does not promise to become a reliable economic activity, it provides the necessary means of subsistence. This doesn't exclude the fact that some of the production will reach markets, see Graph 9 for 1960 and Graph 10 for 1993.

Graph 9 1960: Destination of Crops in Three Communities



Graph 10 1993: Destination of Crops in Three Communities



Source: Sanches Goméz Marta, "Actividades económicas y estratégicas de reproducción en tres comunidades hablantes de zapoteco en los valles de Oaxaca" in *Globalización y deterioro ambiental y reorganización social en el campo* (México: UNAM, 1995)174

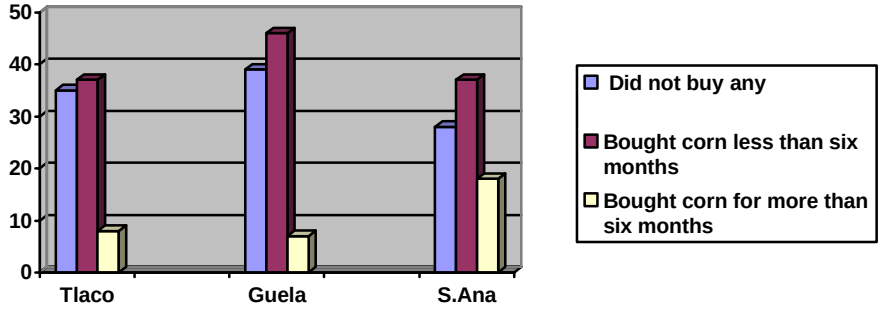
It was also found that the majority of the plots of land measure less than one hectare, and only 3-5% of the land in each of the communities measured three hectares or more.[107] Another important fact to take into account is that the majority of this land is seasonal. The crops raised for self-consumption are corn, beans and squash. Among the crops for both self-consumption and the market are: garlic, peppers, tomato, alfalfa, cumin, flowers, onions, garbanzo, figs and wheat. Of these three communities, Tlacochahuaya contained the highest percentage of irrigated land (32%), and had the greatest diversity of products and the best land. This can explain the differences in the above table. Nevertheless, a general tendency can be seen when contrasting these two graphs--all three communities have diminished or lost the commercial feature of their crops and the land has been concentrated for the production of vital crops for self-consumption. Consequently, we set forward our firs remark that is that *marginalization creates vulnerability in the extended entitlement systems of communities. There is evidence also that starvation has been avoided by the practice of direct production of food and an accentuated practice of cooperation. Furthermore, the expansion of capitalism, which was expected to eventually weaken, destroy or transform the economy of these communities, has not stopped communities from adapting themselves to changes and preserving ancestral economic practices.*

[107] The majority of the land holdings by indigenous or peasant communities are know as *ejidos.* Ejidos are the fruit of the process of the Mexican Revolution. They were created through Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which was influenced mainly by the revolutionary leaders Emiliano Zapata and Ricardo Flores Magón. The lands owned by the haciendas (Spanish plantations), were expropriated and given in the form of indigenous "communities" and ejidos. In Mexico there are 28,058 ejidos and communal lands. Surprisingly, 54% of all land holding in Mexico is held in this form. The ejido and communal land was given in a fixed amount of hectares. As expected, population growth has caused the land to be subdivided into ever smaller pieces as an increasing amount of offspring claim their right to be entitled to the use of land.

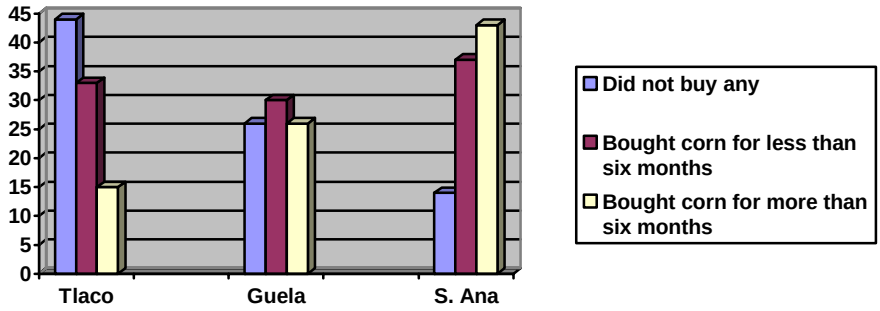
House Capabilities

But what is the impact of the benefits of these crops for the families in these communities? One way to discover this is to see how much these communities were self-reliant in the most basic product of their diet--corn.

Graph 11 1960: Percentages of Families that Bought Corn



Graph 12 1993: Percentages of Families that Bought Corn



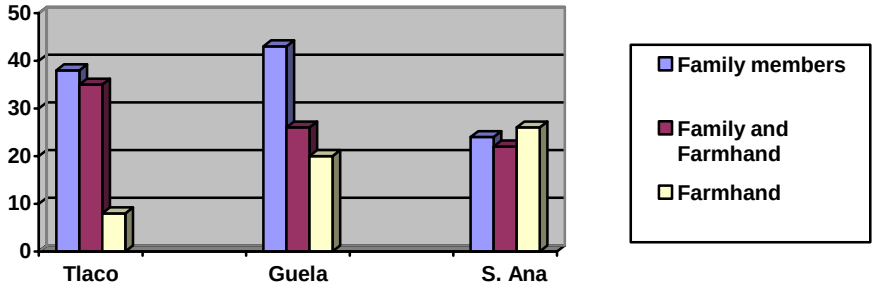
Source: Marta Sanches Goméz "Actividades económicas y estratégicas de reproducción en tres comunidades hablantes de zapoteco en los valles de Oaxaca" in *Globalización y deterioro ambiental y reorganización social en el campo* (México: UNAM, 1995) 175

From Graph 12 it can be observed that higher percentages of families from Guelavía and Santa Ana were buying corn than those from Tlaco. These are the two villages that also have land of lower quality. According to the data of 1993, a total 80% of the families

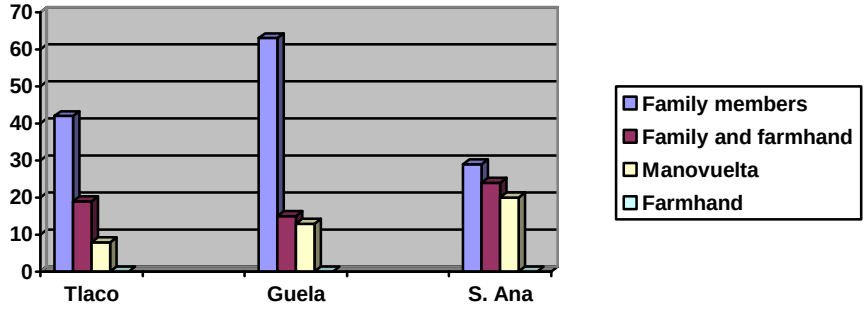
in Santa Ana were buying corn in 1993 for less than six months or more. The existence of cheap corn from the U.S., the lack of credit and food security, and other factors such as falling or unstable prices for food in commercial food production, have greatly reduced incentives for corn production and have forced people to live in subsistence production.[108] However, since an obvious reason for decreased production of corn or production in general could be simply explained by the scarcity of labor, we must also focus on labor conditions.

[108] Oxfam International, an international organization operating in 100 countries, strives for sustainable development and poverty reduction. The International Food Policy Institute is a nonprofit organization that identifies and analyzes policies for sustainability and meeting the food needs of the developing world. Both organizations have reported that the 10 billion dollars that U. S. farmers receive in subsidies, makes possible the export of cheap corn to Mexico. Both organizations have pointed out the direct relationship between U.S. domestic agricultural policies and rural misery in Mexico. See "U.S. Corn Subsidies Said to Damage Mexico", *New York Times* 27 August (2003) available from http//www.mindfully.org/WTO/2003/US-Corn-Subsidies27aug03.htm

Graph 13 1960 Labor Force Used in Crops



Graph 14 1993: Labor Force Used in Crops



Source: Marta Sanches Goméz "Actividades económicas y estratégicas de reproducción en tres comunidades hablantes de zapoteco en los valles de Oaxaca" in *Globalización y deterioro ambiental y reorganización social en el campo* (México: UNAM, 1995) 178

First, according to the data on the labor force, family members by 1993 were increasingly involved in agricultural activities. Also, noticeable is the disappearance of farm workers or paid farmhands. Finally, it is interesting to note that a new way of providing labor was present in 1993. Called *manovuelta* by the villagers, this method entails an exchange of labor based on cooperation that involves no monetary exchange. In trying to explain these patterns, we can speculate that due to the low income level of families and the increasing emigration of labor, the cost of labor has become both scarce, and consequently, expensive. What has been found, however, is that the family members involved in agricultural matters are those that have stayed behind, keeping the

communities alive. Surprisingly, at least in these communities, women are now the main source of labor, due to the emigration of the men. Therefore, the possibility of capability expansion for women has become more restricted, as women have become both the heads of households and mother-farmers. Additionally, child labor has become more valuable and even indispensable. This in turn has made access to education less and less feasible and the children have become more susceptible to joining the flow of emigration as they grow older. In other words, our second remark is that what we here call *household capabilities* (to differentiate them from the institutional opportunities available for these families), were reduced during this period. Emigration became an alternative to these restricted household capabilities. For a more complete perspective, we need to include migration patterns in our research.

Emigration

Development that has come through the market, such as the growth of industry, creation of jobs, access to education, higher levels of income, health care, etc., has not reached the marginalized and voiceless people within the communities. The need for money to work the land, to pay bills, and for housing seems to be the main push-effect for the emigration of young adults in these communities. It has been observed that labor flows to the city of Oaxaca, (capital of the state of Oaxaca), Mexico City and to the United States. Unfortunately economic development only creates jobs at certain points on the map, and these dynamic centers of economic activity demand a labor force of working age, which can come from any region. Therefore, it is not surprising to find communities in Oaxaca sustained by women in the absence of the men of the community; although some men may emigrate only seasonally.

Consequently, farm workers hired by women who were themselves left behind, can increasingly be found carrying out the

responsibilities of the absent members of the community. Surprisingly, in so doing, communal traditions such as reciprocal dependency among members of the community tend to take another form. Nevertheless, income flowing into the community from the absent member(s), keeps the household active and participating in the community. As a result of this, women have been holding *cargos* and responsibilities occupied in the past exclusively by men. The presence of women in the economy of the communities is a common factor among the villages in the different regions.

Against all odds, migration has not destroyed community life. Villagers assume that community life can be practiced regardless of where the members of the community might be residing. Therefore, an individual who resides in the United States and offers housing and help to new immigrants from the village to get established, is in fact doing community work. Since cash is usually the main obstacle for the immigrant to travel to the United States, the money is often obtained in the form of a personal loan. Loans, as well as other types of support that make the trip possible, are also considered part of *guelaguetza (*sharing).

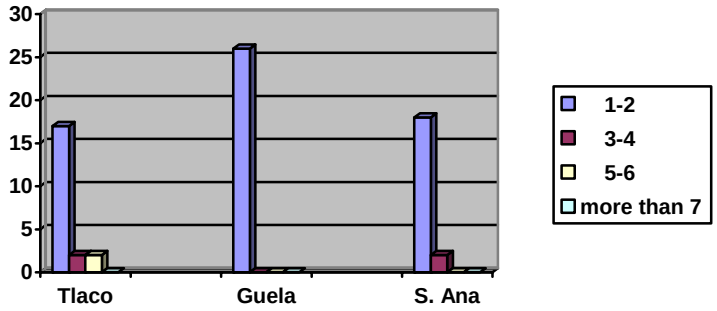
In places like Santa Ana, an arrangement called *mediería* solves the problem of land that is idle due to the emigration of the whole family. Mediería consists of a deal between two families, the family that stays behind in the village and the absent family. The family that remains provides labor by working the land, and the absent family provides money and land. Eventually, the benefits are divided half-and-half between the two households. In this way community life survives and adapts to the phenomenon of migration. It is interesting to take into account the economic structure inside communities such as Santa Ana del Valle. The economy of Santa Ana combines agriculture, the production of woven articles, (rugs, blankets and tapestries), and now emigration. Weaving production and migration, however, seem to have taken priority over agriculture.

Although in Santa Ana the land is held as private property and can be sold, there is a commitment among villagers not to sell the land to outsiders. Sixty-two percent of the land is used for agriculture. This land however, is seasonal land, depending mainly on the rainy season, as there is no irrigated land, and consists mainly of small plots; 26% of the plots are about 2 hectares, 16% are one hectare, and 20% are less than one hectare (Sanchez, 166). In other words, Santa Ana's land is seasonal and consists of small plots of low quality. These characteristics are common to all peasant landholdings in southern Mexico.

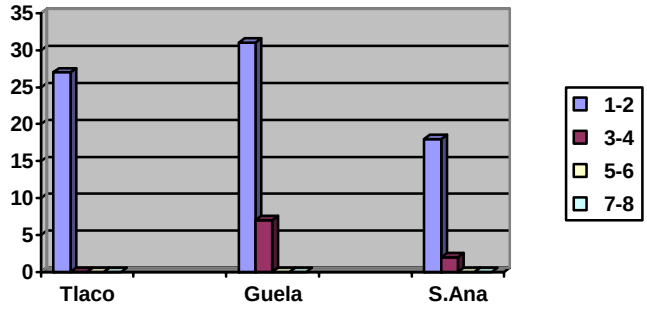
In three Zapotec towns, (San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya, San Juan Guelavía, and Santa Ana del Valle), it was first observed that emigration was an increasing trend. In Guelavía for example, (see Graph 16), 31% of the households experience the departure of 1-2 members, and 7% of the households lost 3-4 members. In contrast to the 1960 (Graph 15) data only 26 % of the households had experienced the departure of 1-2 members, in that year no household reported the loss of 3-4 members. In the 1970s at the end of the economic boom for Mexico, however, emigration levels reached their lowest and then increased again in the 1980s, a tendency which coincides with the debt crisis and the structural adjustments programs required by the International Monetary Fund.

Communal economies such as Santa Ana's have skillfully become economies based on agriculture, handicrafts and emigration. Being able to retain the land, to seek markets for hand crafted goods, to receive money from its emigrants and cultural practices such as *mediería,* have contributed to the survival of this community and cultural life.

Graph 15 1960: Migration Patterns in Three Communities



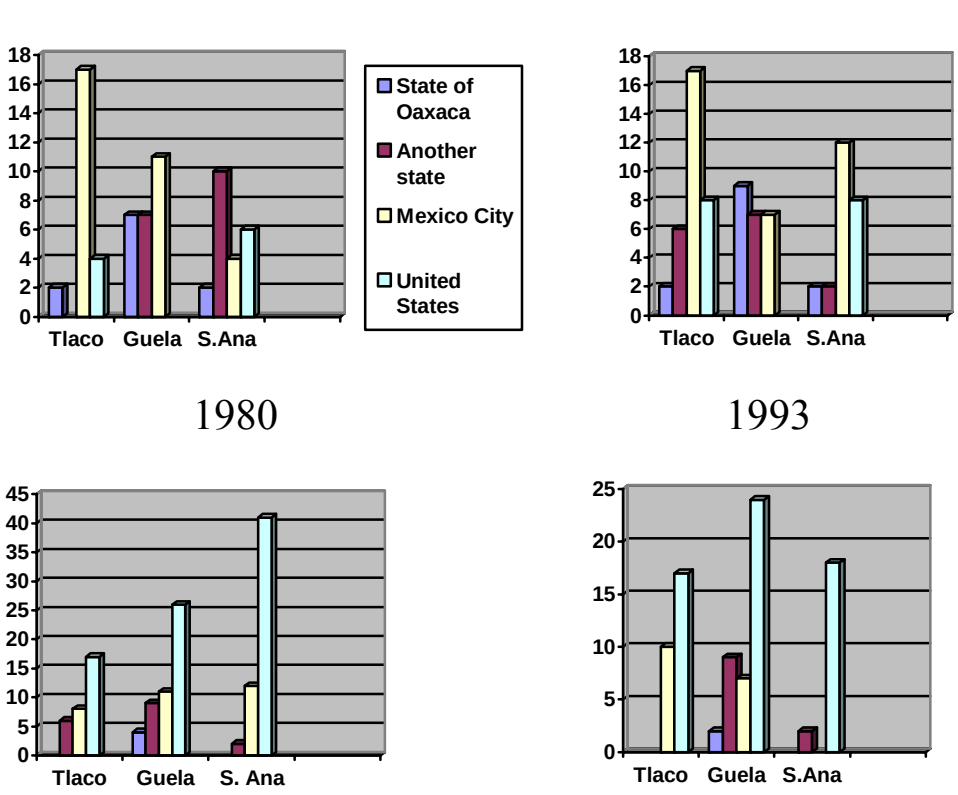
Graph 16 1993: Migration Patterns in Three Communities



Source: Marta Sanches Goméz "Actividades económicas y estratégicas de reproducción en tres comunidades hablantes de zapoteco en los valles de Oaxaca" in *Globalización y deterioro ambiental y reorganización social en el campo* (México: UNAM, 1995) 179

At the beginning of 1980s, urban centers experienced high levels of unemployment due in part to the debt crisis. Mexico City was then slowly substituted by the United States as the main reception center of immigrants. Graph 17 indicates the destination of migrants from these three towns. The new destination, however, became more difficult and implied more risks and higher costs. Obviously more money was required to get there, and crossing an international border without a visa was more dangerous. Statistics given by human rights organizations operating on the border show that around 350 people per year die trying to cross the U.S.-Mexican border without a visa. This situation can explain why the

Graph 17 Destination of Migrants from Three Communities (percentages)



Source: Marta Sanches Goméz "Actividades económicas y estratégicas de reproducción en tres comunidades hablantes de zapoteco en los valles de Oaxaca" in *Globalización y deterioro ambiental y reorganización social en el campo* (México: UNAM, 1995) 179

majority of emigrants from indigenous communities are young, single men that have more chance of surviving the border crossing. Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes calls the border a bleeding wound, affirming that deep in the Mexican consciousness, the memory of the U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1848 and the loss of more than 50% of its territory remain vivid. But is migration a magical, best solution?

Many households depend on funds sent by emigrants, but these remittances arrive sporadically. Children and women work the land and take care of the household, which restricts the children's freedom to go to school. Consequently, emigration

might contribute to the suppression of what the World Bank has denominated human capital, (e.g., women, children and their health), and social capital, (e.g., social relations).
More research needs to be done to determine possible links between an increasing level of emigration (remittances of migrants represent the largest source of income for the entire Mexican economy) and the overall living conditions of children, especially, those with an emigrant parent. Circulatory migration has affected women and children in another significant way. Women are increasingly infected with the HIV virus carried by men who have been exposed to it in the U.S. Mexican health officials believe that of the 16,000 cases of AIDS in rural areas of Mexico, at least 30% became infected by men who, feeling marginalized by the barriers of culture and language in the U.S., sought female partnership.[109]
All of the above suggests *a continuing deterioration of the already delicate economic entitlement condition.* We conclude here that *instead of expanding household capability conditions, emigration may reduce them, further widening the social gender gap by demanding more from women while reducing their freedom, thus making them more vulnerable; although ironically, the amount or quality of commodities they own may increase.* Currently, emigration is a major trend in marginalized rural communities in the valley of Oaxaca. Gijón Cruz, Alicia Sylvia and Martha W. Rees have shown in their rigorous empirical work that although emigration and remittances in the valley of Oaxaca tend to bring about certain positive effects by making it possible to build adequate housing, obtain food, buy commodities, and pay school fees, remittances nevertheless also produce negative effects. These negative effects include a widening inequality, the promotion of external economic dependency, unproductive consumption, and a pressure toward social disintegration.[110]

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[109] Available from http://www.libertadlatina.org/Latin_America_HIV_p9.htm
[110] Gijón Cruz, Alicia Sylvia, Martha W. Rees, and Rafael G. Reyes Morales. "Impacto de remesas internacionales en el ingreso y calidad de vida de las familias de los migrantes en el valle de Tlacolula, Oaxaca". *Ciudades* 47: (2000) 34-42.

Indigenous Communities as Part of the Mainstream Economy

Communities try to regulate the demands from the macro economy and the production for community consumption, and thereby to enhance their entitlement position. Each community appears to function within the limits of ecological systems that sustain the village. An example of this was revealed with the introduction of single-crop farming in the past, which produced negative ecological consequences that the whole community had to face. This was the case of the Chatino peasant economy in Santiago Yaitepec in the state of Oaxaca, where the introduction of coffee created great expectations in 1950 (Lopez 1991). The use of the land to satisfy the demand for coffee created social conflicts inside the community. Land for coffee meant less land for food production. Inequalities between the members of the community grew. Additionally, conflicts deteriorated the socio-religious mechanisms which regulated the accumulation of wealth, and the Chatino people became more dependent on the production of coffee and emigration.

Coffee was introduced in different regions of the state of Oaxaca at the same time. The Sierra Juárez region was previously considered self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs. The region's self-sufficiency was due in large part to the weekly markets that integrated the *tierra fría* vertical climate zone which produced wheat and potatoes and other products with the *tierra templada* zone which provided beans and sugar. Moreover, several towns produced *artesanías* (handcrafted goods), e.g., ixtle fiber products, pottery, leather goods, and wooden saddles. The markets previously operated on a system of barter. Coffee, *ocote* (pitch pine) and salt functioned as mediums of exchange. Up to the 1930s, coffee production was limited.

In the mid-1930s a new kind of wholesale buyer entered the area, Spaniard traders, offering cash and credit in advance to muleteers who would carry manufactured goods and re-sell them

in the markets. Storage houses in the valley were created for coffee, as coffee prices rose steadily between 1938 and 1954. Land use for staple crop production decreased as more and more peasants began unofficially expanding their plots of land for coffee production and became cash oriented for market transactions. Disposable income allowed coffee producers and traders the consumption of manufactured goods, making handcrafted products unattractive. The *tierra templada* economy became a maize supplier to the increasing number of coffee producers. However, peasants lacking the ability to compete with coffee production or without access to land for coffee production became laborers. Bartering declined, and cash eventually replaced ocote and salt. As prices increased, coffee traders replaced the muleteers with trucks. A single truck could replace 33 mules or 80 donkeys, and 8-18 men, and reduced the trip to the city of Oaxaca from 7 to 3 days using only 3 or 4 men (Clark 2000).

Yet, in the mid-1950s the prices for coffee dropped, creating a reservoir of surplus labor which was ready to emigrate. Increasing population growth and a decrease in the production necessary to sustain the household led to the inter-zone market economy being replaced by markets which were more integrated and oriented toward the outside, i.e., to the national economy. Modernization with a greater class differentiation became one of the social characteristics of the Sierra Norte.

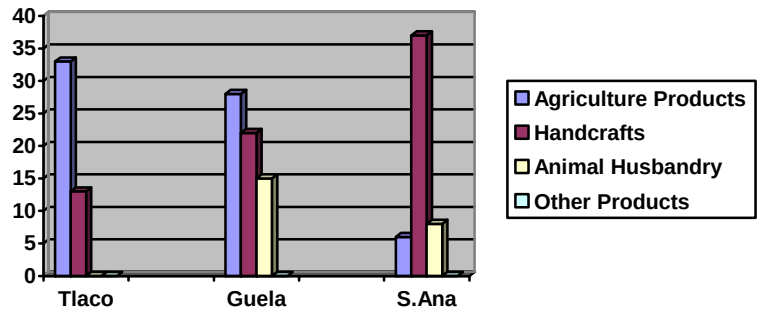
In the example of the Sierra Norte we can see that the mainstream economy relates to the economy of communities in a direct way. People in the communities have vivid memories of these different periods of crises. Periods of hyperinflation, inaccessible prices of food, transportation and clothing are mentioned. Emigration trends suggest that households are unable to maintain a level of income to cope with the high level of inflation. When interviewed, members of different communities expressed similar reasons for the deterioration of living conditions, namely: the size of plots of land, the lack of irrigation systems, the high cost of producing corn, the availability of cheap corn

imported from the U.S., and the lack of credit and government support in general.

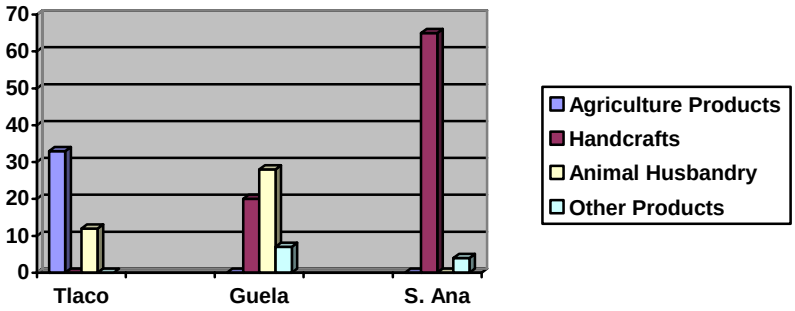
The trend of high levels of emigration also suggests the direct impact of declining government expenditures on agriculture. In 1983, .074% of the GDP was invested in agriculture, and by 1993 this had dropped to only .033%. (Durán Alcantara 1998). Indeed, in the 1980s and 1990s, Mexico experienced a government withdrawal from agriculture, forestry and fishery activities. This was mainly due to the debt crisis and structural adjustment programs. While the U.S, Canada and Europe experienced disputes regarding subsidies to the agriculture sector, Mexico was shifting to the manufacturing and trading sectors. At the national level, federal and private financing aid to work the land became scarce (Calva 1995).

What can be stated here is that the *entitlement systems also depend on institutional capability assets, which can be identified by the existence of credits, public assets,(e.g., government support), physical assets, (e.g., land, and irrigation systems), national policies and the allocation of resources*. In conclusion, it can be said that *indigenous economic practices, though internally oriented, appear to be dynamicly and directly connected to the mainstream economy, and as such, subject to transformation and the adoption of an entitlement system which is dependant on institutional capabilities and access to markets.* In addition to these considerations we look at the importance of agriculture and other commercial activities to see if the impact of these activities benefits these communities.

Graph 18 1960: Commercial Activities in Three Communities



Graph 19 1993: Commercial Activities in Three Communities



Source: Marta Sanches Goméz "Actividades económicas y estratégicas de reproducción en tres comunidades hablantes de zapoteco en los valles de Oaxaca" in *Globalización y deterioro ambiental y reorganización social en el campo* (México: UNAM, 1995) 179

Graph 19 reveals that revenues from agricultural products declined and effectively disappeared from two of the communities. This suggests that though agricultural activities can be important for the subsistence of families, it has nonetheless become less and less attractive as a commercial endeavor. Santa Ana, with the worst conditions of land, has moved to the production of hand crafted goods, (mainly tapestries). The most extreme scenario is the one presented by Guelavía, as data has suggested that this town is

highly dependant on the cash sent by its migrant workers who live in the U.S., in other states in Mexico, and in Mexico City.

Some remarks are worth reviewing from the observations made up to this point. First, the constant importance of agriculture for self-consumption remains the most prominent feature of these three communities. Although agriculture is important for survival and to avoid starvation, remarkably, it is disappearing as a possibility for commercialization. In contrast to this pattern, emigration has increased in importance and attractiveness for these communities, especially the ones with no possibility of handcraft production and access to markets. Guelavía is an example of the latter case, due to the lack of water and the loss of a source of raw material, (the reeds that grew in the valley which in the past were used to make baskets). In addition to the delicate and risky economic position in which Santa Ana finds itself, it is important to notice that the majority of commercial transactions are through middlemen; for instance 60% of the sales carried out by the villagers of Santa Ana were done through intermediaries. The need to depend on intermediaries limited the earnings from the sale of agricultural products and handcrafts. This leads us to conclude that although communities seem to be connected to mainstream markets in terms of transformation and the shaping of entitlement system *the sets of entitlements deteriorate not because of the imperfect nature of markets, but due to a lack of full access to markets. Fair access to markets stands out as a key factor above and beyond market functions.* It is not surprising, therefore, that economic policies which place a priority on the market as the mechanism to promote economic development have not succeeded.

Economic Development Projects

Clearly the partial conclusions that we have drawn up to this point suggest the difficulty in attempting a clear-cut separation between economics and worldview. Some studies, however, differ from this observation. For instance, Whitecotton (1977) in his

analysis of the Zapotec culture in Oaxaca affirms that peasant economics differs from capitalist economics in degree rather than in kind. His argument is that capital, credit, savings and investments are concepts that are found in all societies. Even though it cannot be denied that these concepts are found in these Zapotec communities, Whitecotton's analysis seems to imply the existence of several evolutionary stages. The standard assumption is that economies can be classified according to their similarity and approximation to the economies of the west. Rostow's oft-quoted evolutionary classification of economies and societies as traditional, mature, take-off and mass consumption, appears in many studies as an operating assumption.[111] Here we see the need for thinking of development as a process that rises up worldview and what the people values the most, rather than separated it from daily living. In this sense, economic development, by any definition, has to be true-to-culture (Van der Walt 1997). Production for instance can occur, (as it does in the valley of Oaxaca), not only as a response to the demand of the markets but also for its use value, its exchange value, (where no money is involved), and its source of sustainability. Yet in these communities development has generally been understood as the owning of a single commodity or having access to a single service, (e.g., a cement floor, electricity, potable water, road construction). Within communities, however, electrification and other services, though beneficial, have in general brought an increasing cost to everyone, augmenting the pressure to obtain cash in economies where cash was not previously needed as a primary item of exchange. In consequence, increasing numbers of community members face inevitable pressure to go outside the community to work for cash. A survey done in 1984 revealed that in the Mixtec region of Oaxaca, wages from the labor force outside of the region represented 64% of the total income of families that depend on seasonal employment, and of that total, 56% came from the United

[111] See Rostow W.W., "The Five Stages of Economic Growth" In Kanh, Rajani *Paradigmas in Economic Development: Classic Perspectives Critiques, and Reflection* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe 1994)

States. Unfortunately, in spite of the numerous development projects carried out, poverty and marginalization have been persistent in the Mixtec area as in others.

In his work on economic development in a village in rural Oaxaca, Jeffrey H. Cohen observed that as the community of Santa Ana engaged in commercial and governmental projects, it experienced an increasing dependency on the outside. In the Zapotec village of Santa Ana, the state government has sought to make deals with certain people in the region who have strong economic interests in building highways and communication projects. Members of the community that had immediate access to resources and wealth and supported these government projects were immediately recognized by the government as community representatives. *Therefore, as projects were executed in collaboration with wealthy members, those members became the recipients of the main benefits, and consequently the inequalities worsened* (Cohen 1990). To observe only the struggles, deprivations and limitations of these communities, however, does not provide a complete scenario regarding the identity of these communities. Their accumulated wisdom is a contribution that these communities give to society.

Nature and Social Security

In spite of the fact that indigenous communities are themselves subject at times to attitudes and actions of indifference, destruction and domination toward nature, the inclusiveness of nature has been present in the discourse and way of life of indigenous communities. Mother-children images evoke a relationship that contains what King and Woodyard have called *relational power*, (1999) which calls for a relation of respect, affirmation and interdependency.

Many economic policies in southern Mexico, though recognized as productive strategies, have in fact caused permanent damage to the environment. Unfortunately, many of these

programs produce services for a small percentage of the population, and as a consequence these programs respond to the desires of the privileged, reinforcing the already existing inequalities. Ecologist Alejandro Toledo (1988) has pointed out that governmental programs and private projects are executed without taking into account the self-standing value of the environment. Toledo also laments that the demand in the resource market focuses on a partial view of the environment, requiring the extraction of a single resource from a very complex ecological system without considering the effects of that extraction on the eco system. This single resource view has resulted in the assumption that the ecological system of a region can be valued in terms of the existence of a single resource, dismissing collateral resources as non-productive and valueless. Toledo has also pointed out that in the decades of 1950-1980, federal economic policies in southern Mexico aimed to solve problems created by:

a) an excessive demographic and economic centralization,
b) the unbalanced and unequal distribution of economic benefits throughout the region,
c) the profound inequalities within the urban areas, and
d) the lack of integration of these urban centers with the rural areas that surround them.

Consequently, the coastal areas of southern Mexico became the targets for agro-industrial/urban-industrial programs combined with large infrastructure projects. The long-run expectations were the maximum exploitation of the resources in the region. An export-oriented industry through massive investment was installed in the region to extract minerals and oil. This relational power and the accumulated indigenous wisdom of living with nature do not stand in isolation; economists as well as environmental organizations have also made urgent appeals for an alternative view of nature.

An inside account of community living in Oaxaca was given by Marcelino Dominguez, a Mixe Indian. In an essay about the power of community, he begins by pointing out that the only education he

has received, was given and shaped by community living (Dominguez 1998). He affirms that education is formed through work with the community, responsibility toward others and individual character formation, it cannot be an individualistic or intellectual training alone.

Dominguez relates how Spaniards in the 1400's could not conquer the Mixes.

> "We were the exception, therefore the community structure was never disrupted from outside. The social structure of the community has functioned through history as a shield from economic structures and ideological impositions from outside. It has functioned also as a shield of resistance from the effects of colonialism and the dominant class." (Dominguez 1998)

Dominguez points out that there are six elements that laid the foundations of power in the community. His list includes traditional elements that can be found in all the indigenous peoples of Oaxaca. The first element is land. The land belongs to the community and any member of the community can work it. However, the land cannot be sold or given to anyone; it is for growing food to feed families. The "comunero" or the member of the community that holds the right over the land maintains this privilege as long as he does not break this agreement regarding the land.

The second foundation is the indigenous language, as language keeps history alive, sustaining culture. *Kajpn janaanip* translates as communal desires, *Ja'ay janaanip as* collective decisions, and *kajpx Muuky* as total agreement. Dominguez explains that these concepts are put into practice daily in solving problems and conflicts in the community.

Third, the *asamblea*, (assembly), is the group of members of the community fifteen years and older, and the *consejo comunal*, is the communal council that is made up of teachers, elders, women and people of good character. The communal council meets one day before the community meeting and discusses possible solutions, making suggestions and setting forth guidelines. The

final decisions, nevertheless, are made the following day when the whole community gathers.

The fourth foundation is *cargos*, (positions of public office), which involve everything from being a member of the community police to being town mayor. There are ten community positions that precede reaching the highest office. Every candidate must begin at the lowest rung as a town police officer, and then must wait from months to years before slowly moving up to higher offices. In spite of this, 80% of the comuneros become *presidente municipal*, (head of the municipio). The attitude of a public servant is to function as a true servant of the community. It is never considered a position of power and individual career achievement.

Fifth, *tequio* is a word that describes a common element in the majority of the communities in southern Mexico. A *tequio* is a required amount of days of work given freely to the improvement or care of the community. In the Mixe community, fifteen days per year are given to the community by each head of family. The tequio system has been the way communities have solved such problems as the need for building roads and schools, the lack of housing, dealing with natural disasters, and taking care of the environment. In many ways, the *tequio* has been the indigenous response to meet the indifference and deficiencies of state and federal governmental assistance to the communities.

Finally, *la fiesta*, (party) is the way the community celebrates living together and simultaneously serves as a leveling of economic differences. A comunero takes over the expenses of a communal celebration fiesta six times in his or her life. Besides food, the comunero provides free room and board for visitors during the religious celebration. In this way, accumulated wealth is channeled back to the community.

An additional element is *guelaguetza*, (sharing); an element of community living found among Zapotec villages. Guelaguetza represents an economic exchange of labor among family members or friends. It is an exchange of assistance to a second party in need. For example, family members generally exchange labor with each

other during planting and harvesting. Guelaguetza works as an equal exchange of labor or resources that occurs as both parties schedule it.

It can be pointed out that the economic principles in standard economics, (such as utility satisfaction, the supremacy of the individual, the goodness of ambition), though broadly accepted and unquestioned in other settings, do not foster a language of mutual understanding between national economic planners and the members of the communities when common goals are sought. However, essential elements of indigenous communities, if understood, could be expanded and implemented in other areas to help people in need within the larger society. For example, a system of *tequio* could bring people together to carry out such difficult tasks as, the creation or preservation of water systems, preventive health care, and the protection of the environment on a large scale. All this could potentially be done at a low cost with free labor or even with modest financial contributions from the community. On the other hand, *the disappearance of communal living can raise infrastructure and social costs for society. For centuries, these communities have offered a lower cost of social security for families within the principles of community living.*

The Cargo System

The *cargo system* has been a subject of study for ethnographers of Mesoamerica during the last fifty years, and southern Mexico has been the main region of study. These studies have revealed to the world communities that do not fit the stereotypes of downtrodden, victimized and passive individuals. The cargo system can be defined as civil-religious offices that are occupied by men of the community for a period of a year. It does not include any salary, but on the contrary requires the sponsorship of various religious celebrations, which implies large amounts of money. The men selected serve their office for a year and then go back to their daily work in the community. Although the cargo

system is more often linked to religious activities only, such as the celebrations of saints and patrons of the villages, the men that serve in the cargo system can have previously served in civil offices or in religious posts.

Among the most important studies in Chiapas in the area of cargos is the one carried out by the Harvard Chiapas Report. In his study on the Zinancantán township in Chiapas, Frank Cancian (1965), who was part of this project, reported on the important role of the cargo system within the economy and the political system of the village. John Chance (1998) has reevaluated the contributions of ethnographers of Mesoamerica regarding the cargo system, (*e.g.*, Eric Wolf, De Walt, William Taylor, Waldemar Smith and Frank Canacian among others) and states that the civil cargo system hierarchy in Mesoamerica emerged in the 16th century as a response to Spanish pressure for an imposed European-derived model of towns in indigenous communities.[112] The cargo system as it is known today did not appear, argues Chance, until the late 18th century when the *cofradías,*[113] (the main financing source to pay for religious fiestas), were expropriated by the Spanish church, and fiestas were prohibited.

The early *cargo* system, therefore, appeared as a symbol of autonomy and identity; and in its early civil form was more concerned with representation toward the rest of society. It was not until the 19th century when the early civil cargo system evolved into a civil-religious system. This shift was also a result of pressure from the government and church in the form of attacks and infiltration. The new civil-religious cargo system rested financially on private individuals and less on corporate religious institutions, which at that time were under scrutiny by the government. Consequently, the old political polarizing structures of nobles and

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[112] See John K Chance, "Changes in Twentieth-Century Mesoamerican *Cargo* Systems" in Whitterford Michael B., edit. *Crossing Currents: Continuity and Change in Latin America*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998), Frank Cancian, *Economics and Prestige in a Mayan Community: the Religious Cargo System in Zinacantan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965). Evon Voght, , *The Zinacantecos of Mexico: A Modern Maya Way of Life* (Forth Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1990)

[113] *The cofradías* were religious sodalities formed to finance religious celebrations in honor of saints and patrons. The cofradías were the center for religious offices in colonial times.

commoners within the communities which had been promoted by Europeans collapsed. This change allowed communities to focus more attention inward (with the practice of local rituals) than outward.

Religious cargos, a third form of the cargo system, appeared in the 20th century. Cargos that are exclusively religious in nature have now become common in southern Mexico. This religious nature seems to be a response to a separation between the religious and civil cargo-holders, due to government discomfort with the idea of autonomy in the communities. This governmental concern has grown into an active opposition by incorporating local community leaders into high political positions in the regional government structure. This has led to a number of communities becoming dependent and submissive. Nevertheless, many have survived; transforming and redefining themselves through this most recent form of the cargo system, which once again emphasizes internal life and identity.

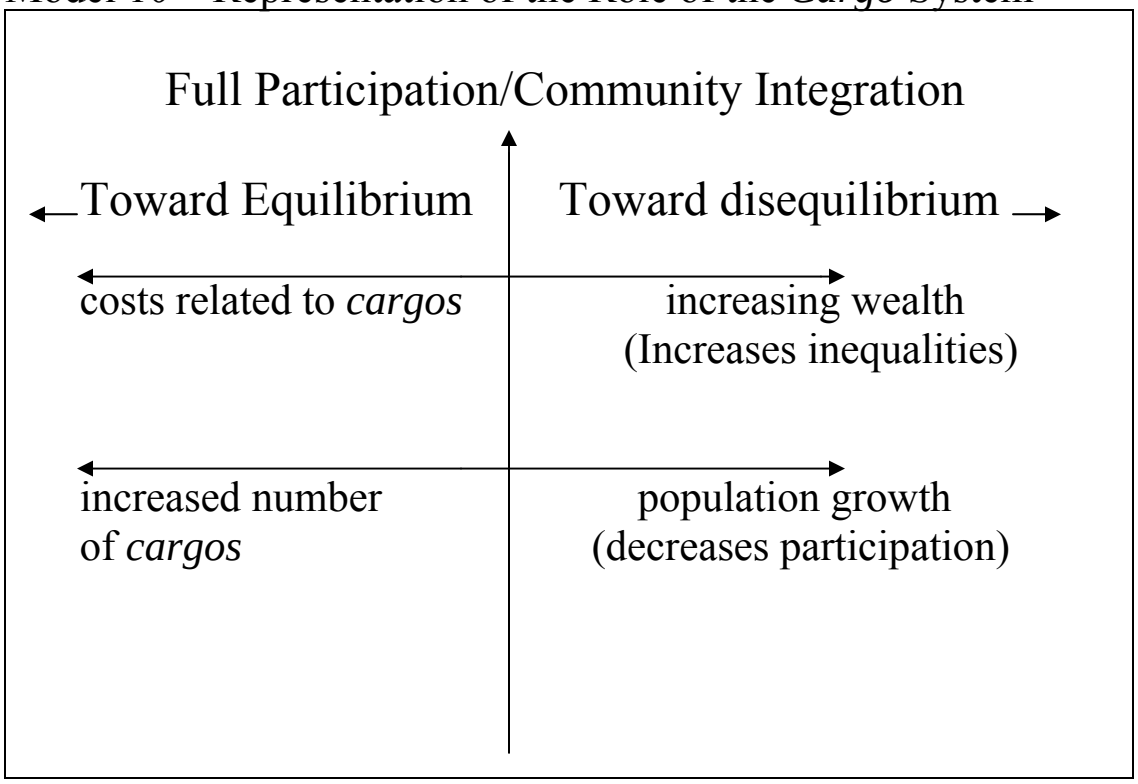
The debate regarding the role and effect of the cargo system has been a subject of debate among scholars in the field. However, two major tendencies can be extrapolated. The first, known as the stratifying interpretation of the cargo system, states that cargos reinforce and reaffirm community values as well as those of individuals (Cancian 1965). In this way the cargo system, tend to reinforce the important values of the Mayans; the value of manual work and community service.

The second approach, known as the leveling perspective, affirms that the cargo system tends to function as a leveling economic mechanism. The hosting of major fiestas by a household gives prestige and honor to the office holder of the cargo; and as that household spends its accumulated wealth, it gives back to the community, allowing wealth to be leveled to some degree. It is argued then that this tendency *reduces conflict* and *stimulates community integration*.

In both of the above perspectives, the relevance of the cargo system reveals the sense of social equilibrium. Model 10 reflects

the dynamics of the cargo system and community integration as observed by Cancian in Chiapas. Accumulation of wealth as well as population growth, appear to threaten participation and integration, two vital aspects of the identity and survival of the community.

Model 10 Representation of the Role of the *Cargo* System



Source: Adapted from Frank Cancian, *Economics and Prestige in a Maya Community* (Stanford: Stanford, California 1965) and John K.Chance, "Changes in Twentieth-Century Mesoamerican *Cargo* Systems", in Michael B. Whitterford, ed., *Crossing Currents: Continuity and Change in Latin America* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998). See also Frank Cancian"Who is rebelling in Chiapas?" in Whitterford Michael B., ed., *Crossing Currents: Continuity and Change in Latin America* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998)

We close this section with three final remarks. First, it is evident that our findings regarding the entitlement system appear embedded in an economy that is based on principles of reciprocity. The contributions of Karl Polanyi in his classic book *The Great Transformation* become relevant at this point. Polanyi points out the distinction between economic systems which are based on three different principles: those of reciprocity, redistribution, and markets. An economic system which is guided by the principle of reciprocity promotes a system of obligations and mutual indebtedness, assuring in this way, the preservation of social relations. An economic system based on the principle of

redistribution is one in which the total product of labor is brought and delivered to a central authority, which eventually distributes all goods to producers and non-producers alike. Finally, an economic system guided by market principles is a system in which products are exchanged and arranged according to the will of markets. Anonymity and impersonality dominate the interaction of exchange in these arrangements, where products are eventually bought and sold under the regulations of a price system.

The economy found in indigenous communities bears the characteristics of the first type of economic system; that is, an economic system guided by the principle of reciprocity. Consequently, our future discussion will be based on this understanding--that indigenous economy, (what has been identified as *true-to-culture economics* in our previous chapter), orients its production, consumption and redistribution of goods and services by the principle of reciprocity and cooperation. We shall return to this important issue in our next chapter.

Secondly, our findings on community living in southern Mexico also describe an economy which responds to the needs and cultural identity of the people in the particular context of Mesoamerica. This type of reciprocity-based economy, though previously doomed to disappear due to the advance of the market-led economy, remains in fact a *living economy*, and has been designed and set in motion by people equipped with cultural, economic, ecological and political understanding of their context. Consequently, to appreciate this economy an understanding of the cultural context is required.

Finally, this living economy should not be viewed as an isolated phenomenon but rather as a historical development which has been shaped by economic interaction with other types of economic systems through negotiations, simulation and even rebellions.

C. Acquirement Failure

Here we retake our analysis of conflict to argue that in attempting to correct the problem of the crisis in 1982, the economic route which was taken (at least until 1994), was one of competitiveness. The imposition of the IMF and World Bank solutions had a *double impact* in terms of the capabilities of communities in southern Mexico, especially in Chiapas. Using Amartya Sen's methodology and in agreement with the CONAPO Report and the UN Human Development Report, we infer that the reduction of subsidies for products such as coffee, (though to the IMF experts it seemed at the time to be an effective measure to correct a distortion of real coffee prices in the markets), in fact exacerbated *institutional sources of entitlements*. These sources of entitlements which were aimed at supporting commercial agricultural activities, (e.g., subsidies, credit, seeds, irrigation, technical assistance), entered a stage of crisis and become unattainable. Nevertheless, the reforms did not all have equal impact, since those with more land and with more access to credit and irrigation experienced greater benefits. In this way, the reforms mainly reduced the opportunities of the poor who depended on access to smaller plots of land for their subsistence.

In addition to the failure of institutional sources of entitlements, *household entitlement sources* (represented by assets, education, safety, savings, etc.) aimed at directly sustaining the wellbeing of families were also crippled, forcing the poor to concentrate all of their energy, time and cash as well as all of the labor of each household on survival, political demonstrations or emigration. It was obvious that the process of erosion of capabilities disabled strategies of the peasants to cope with extreme poverty. The failure of capabilities obligated peasants to search for work solely to obtain food.

The effects of the economic process, however, were felt nationwide, not only in southern Mexico. In terms of health, the ISSTE (the Institute for Public Health) reported an increase in

children of one year or younger who were suffering from malnutrition. By 1993 Chiapas emerged as the state with the highest malnutrition rate; 66.74% of its population was suffering from malnutrition, and 88.6% of its children suffered from chronic malnutrition (Chiapas en Cifras 1997). In the area of education, the national graduation rate also declined at all educational levels, and the rate of school drop outs grew by 3% annually. Acts of crime also increased and in Mexico City nearly tripled between 1981 and 1987 (Lustig and Szekely 1997).

The collapse of grain prices revealed the high vulnerability of an economy where agrarian workers depend on a single export. Chiapas, as the main national exporter of coffee was an easy target. The high interest rates, the collapsing of guaranteed international prices for coffee and cacao (which dropped 70% between 1984 and 1992), reduced the income of small farmers. The small farmers were mainly indigenous and represented 65% of the coffee producers in Mexico. An additional or alternative economic activity which provided economic security for peasants in the region of the rebellion in Chiapas was livestock. Two factors eroded this latter economic alternative. First, in 1992 the livestock industry entered a period of crisis due to infected livestock, and trade was therefore suspended. Second, President Salinas issued a decree to stop the deforestation of the Lacandon Jungle, in preparation for the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. As an increasing number of cattle demanded more and more pasture land, livestock activities became seen as hostile to the environment. The expansion and inefficiency of the cattle industry was indeed reducing the amount of forest at the rate of one hectare of forest being felled per livestock animal. Adding to this, cheap prices of meat imported from Guatemala ended any hope of recovery (Tello 2000). Peasants in Chiapas felt totally disengaged from economic benefits, in part because of the effects of a *single product export vulnerability* combined with strangulating internal economic events.

We now recall what we have stated in Chapter III (see Models 8 and 9) regarding the dynamics of rebellions. As part of the *process of disengagement*, our next illustration (Model 11) integrates what has been said up to this point regarding institutional and household sources of entitlements. The elements included in the process of disengagement constitute the acute multi-dimensional disabling environment that people experienced before the rebellion. These elements, which appeared for a variety of reasons, became part of the social, economic and political reality of communities prior to the uprising. *It was this acute disabling environment which made the announcement of an economic agreement with the U.S. and Canada (implying the formal imposition of a market-led economy over the reciprocity-based economy, the ending of the protection of communal land, the supremacy of competition over cooperation, etc.) the equivalent of an economic death sentence.* A second modification in this model is what we have called *true-to-culture* socioeconomic and political arrangements, which now appears more complex than Model 9 in our previous chapter, due to our findings on community living. In Model 11 we see that the disregarding of these complex cultural, economic, political and religious aspects, and the devastating impact of the removal of the constitutional entitlement to communal land, deserve greater attention in order to understand the Chiapas uprising.

Model 11 Dynamics of the Zapatista Rebellion (III)

(Zapatista Armed Uprising)
OPEN CONFLICT
Failure of mediating mechanisms

Trigger factors
•Acknowledgment that elite-actors were responsible for their situation
• Alliances with other groups, armed or clandestine
(after the 1968 repression)
• Erosion and crisis of legitimacy
• Disillusionment with civil organizations
• Fruitless civil demonstrations

The process of disengagement
● Constitutional rights regarding the land

● Property tenure

Humiliation



● Access to justice:

●(Impunity/unresolved claims
grievances, no land entitling)

● Economic means to continue to function
● Economic security
● Entitlement Sources (institutional, household)

● Recognition and validity to claims
(Exclusionist nature of Mexican State
Protecting rights of indigenous people)

● Access to housing, education, income, communications
● Human security (lack of protection)
●Human Development

- A disregard of true-to-culture socio-economic and political arrangements:
- Cooperation/equality mechanism/ equilibrium/ participation/values
- Worldview of the land/ Ecological limits/ reciprocity/communal security by entitlements/ecological wisdom/*tequio* system
- Customary law and ancestral uses and traditions linked to issues of
- identity, language, survival.

Dynamics of Enrichment and Impoverishment & Entitlement Failure

Competitiveness / Economic Growth Stability (low inflation) / Confidence

Globalization of Capital: Liberalization / Privatization / Deregulation

Latent Conflict

We argue that that the current expansion of capital, known as globalization, is connected to the process of disengagement (see illustration in model 11). In addition to the fact that the rebels in Chiapas historically experienced market exclusion and displacement, we argue that the intensity of the application of competition as a road to economic improvement favored the actors with assets and access to the markets, leaving behind those without assets and access. At the international level the exclusionist nature of globalization resides in the generally restricted markets and the deteriorating terms of trade for Mexican exports. At the national level unqualified labor might be excluded from higher wages as competition is implanted and qualified labor is chosen over unqualified workers. Lustig and Székely (1997) have reported that in the case of Mexico during the 1980's, income grew for those who were qualified and that the uneducated became excluded.

To comprehend the dynamics of the exclusionist nature of the current international economic process, Goudzwaard (2003) has identified two complementary yet contradictory dynamics: the dynamics of enrichment and the dynamics of impoverishment. Within these two dynamics we find three forms of exclusion (see Model 12). First is *property-exclusion*. Export-oriented countries (represented by the right circle) are excluded from the monopoly and creation of international currency held by wealthy countries (represented by the left circle). Devaluations and indebtedness, which hurt the majority of export-oriented countries, can both be explained by having their roots in this type of exclusion. These newly created currencies in the form of speculative capital are attracted to high levels of profit in developing countries, and can also easily leave if the markets present too great a risk. Capital flight in Mexico (in 1982 and again in 1994) is a good example in this respect.

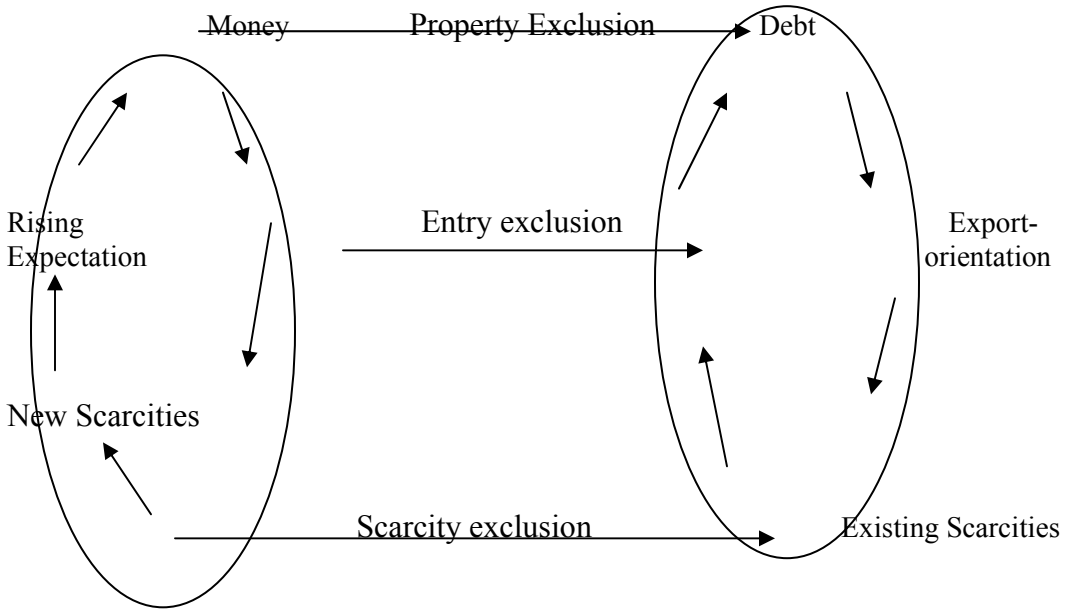
Second, *entry-exclusion* restricts the entrance of exports from developing countries, although ironically, wealthy countries have pushed for these same economies to increase their exports. As the markets become limited due to the increasing number of

developing countries exporting similar goods, prices for exported goods tend to fall.[114] In Chiapas the intensification of the use of land or the acquisition of more land in order to increase exports can be understood as the result of this entry–exclusion process.

The third form, *scarcity-exclusion*, has two facets. First, after international currency is created by wealthy countries and flows in the form of international direct investment, the majority of this flow stays in the markets of industrialized countries (80%), due to the high level of profits, while developing countries capture less than 20% of the total flow. Economies such as the Mexican market therefore, have to strive to attract productive foreign investment in the hopes of building skillful labor, building structure, etc. Second, as these investments expand in the recipient countries, new forms of scarcity are introduced through marketing. The disillusionment resides, however, in the fact that the real scarcities remain unchanged. The scarcities remain intact while the main actors--multinational companies, reap the benefits.

[114] For export-oriented countries, the terms of trade tend to fall, i.e., the amount of exports to be produced tends to increase (due to their low prices) in order to maintain the capacity to buy other goods in the international market.

Model 12 Three Forms of Exclusion



Source: Goudzwaard, Bob. *Enrichment, Empoverishment and the Power of Exclusion* Contributions to the CLAI Consultation, Buenos Aires (April-May, 2003)

Since most of the current conflicts are found in developing countries, a possible path for research could therefore be the field of economic exclusion related to conflicts. Are there conflicts, (such as the Zapatista uprising), that suggest a relationship between levels and types of exclusion and armed movements? What we do know, however, is that the effects of excluding people from the benefits of markets have been denounced by both civil society and the indigenous movement. Civil organizations in Mexico have called for discussions and public consultations on different aspects of the economic and social process tied to exclusion. Among them is the Mexican Network of Action to Free Trade (RMALC), a Mexican organization which in collaboration with the *Centro de Estudios Sobre Transnacionalización, Economía y Sociedad* (CETES-Chile), Common Frontiers (Canada), Development Gap-Alliance for Responsible Trade (USA); Instituto Brasileiro de

Analise Social e Econômica (IBASE-Brazil) and the Réseau Québécois sur L'Intégration Continentale (RQIC-Québec), have made the unfairness of free trade public knowledge in Mexico. This civil movement has involved students and worker organizations across the continent, building economic and social alternatives to the current situation in the Americas.[115] Different publications produced by this movement warn that the issue on the table is not free trade vs. protection, or integration vs. isolation, but the determination of the rules of the game and the question, "Who would benefit from agreements?" Insistence on the human element as the center of any economic plan, and the inclusion of people in national decision-making, have both been central to this movement.

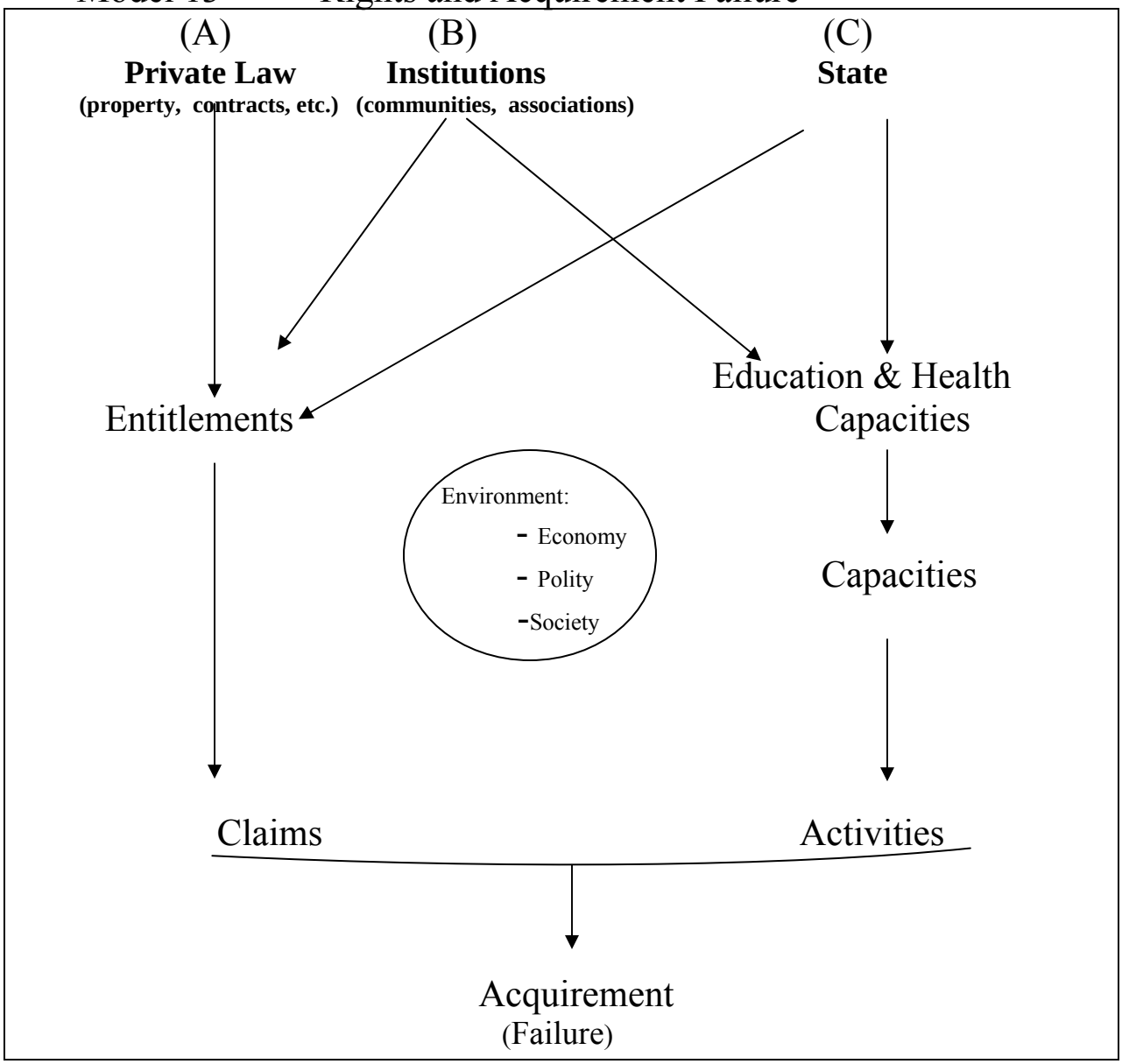
> The general principles of this proposal are the following:
> a) Trade and investment are not and must not be an end in themselves but rather tools to achieve development and sustainability with justice.
> b) Citizens of the Americas are called not just to approve the economic trend but to participate, evaluate and implement the agreements that would affect their lives, and build alternatives toward that end if necessary.
> c) The main goals of these alternatives should be the fostering of sustainable national projects, the social wellbeing of people and the reduction of inequalities at all levels.

The indigenous discourse, has also denounced the exclusionist nature of the economic process in Chiapas. The response of this indigenous movement to an exclusionist process has been one of a *struggle for rights*. The challenge therefore is to identify the connection between rights and economics. We will explore the existence of a fundamental connection based on the sources of entitlements by De Gaay Fortman. De Gaay Fortman suggests that entitlements can be rooted in ownership, contracts, or tenure, (side

[115] *Alternativas para las Américas: hacia la construcción de un acuerdo hemisférico de los pueblos* (Mexico, D.F: REMALC, 1999)

A of Model 13). Complementing this argument and according to our case in southern Mexico, we suggest also that communal rights (side B), flow from the community, giving to members of the community the rights to the land, access to all benefits and full participation in community living. Based on these entitlements, a holder can make daily claims. Due to external factors current entitlement positions may be affected. Consequently, these claims may fail and not be concretized. Therefore, the process of entitlement results in *failure of acquirement*. Additionally, side C in our illustration, describes the flow of entitlements based on arrangements made by the State. In the case of Mexico these rights include secular education for all Mexicans and the right to the land, both of which are rooted in the Mexican Constitution. The exercise of these rights guaranteed by the state leads to entitlements, and capacity building. In turn, these capabilities allow people to execute laborious and diverse activities, which stimulate creativity and build a sense of pride and honor into the daily lives of people. In such a context, vulnerable people are protected from major disruptions in their already daily hardships. Nevertheless, the process is subject to failure. As claims become unfulfilled or unrealized, people are unable to carry out activities, (working the land for example), and consequently, the process ends in acquirement failure.

Model 13 Rights and Acquirement Failure



Source: Source: Bas de Gaay Fortman, "Safe Water" in J.W. de Visser and C. Mbazira eds., *Water Delivery: Public or Private?* (Utrecht: Institute of Constitutional and Administrative Law and Community Law Centre, 2006)

Acquirement failure therefore is a dynamic process. It has as a context a productivity oriented economy which tries to move peasants from a subsistence economy to a more productive sector, yet without protecting their entitlements or providing any other mechanism for protection. In this way, a subsistence peasant

becomes a subsistence worker, and a process of marginalization is generated (De Gaay Fortman 1999). The result is workers displaced by the economic process. On one hand this economic process sabotages the subsistence economy, and on the other, it promotes large scale economic growth, (overlooking entitlement systems) and is accompanied by more insecurity, and marginalization. Acquirement failure is the result of the operating economic policies and a massive exclusionist process that denies the fulfillment of rights and entitlements, even as a greater number of the population fails to obtain the material means to live the kind of lives they want to live.

It is worthy of notice that historically it is the state (side C) which grants entitlement and capacities based on rights. Designed economic policies and the law of the land, therefore, can be associated mainly with the state. Although it is obvious that the state claims that the issued policies are aimed at providing protection and security, opposite results may be produced. For instance, in the case of the communities in Chiapas, during the period of economic adjustments already discussed, economic policies led to the disabling of the legal structures which protected and honored the rights and entitlements provided by the community systems. As we have seen, most indigenous organizations struggled for the protection or regularization of their access to the land. Since the state did not respond in time to protect the rights to the land, (or did not respond at all), indigenous organizations acted to protect their entitlements based on rights. *The Zapatista uprising can therefore be seen as a movement that found no other alternative than to try to protect entitlements from below.*

It is important to point out that sources of entitlements are not necessarily independent and separate from each other. For instance, as we have seen in our remarks, communities also contributed to the character of the children and non-formal education. Although private contracts, communities and the state's legal intentions are aimed at yielding entitlements, entitlement

failure persists as rights and entitlements are ignored and not included in the development goals.

Therefore, e*ntitlements and claims (household or institutional) that are not concretized or do not result in laborious activities or work, (which in general are sources of self-worth and dignity), lead to acquirement failure.* Consequently, in addition to providing the material means to live, the fulfillment of rights, entitlements and claims, promote a sense of worth and dignity in the process.

In the same vein, regarding the case of southern Mexico, it can be inferred that economic events such as emigration cannot be fully understood without taking into account the process of acquirement failure. As we have seen in the case of some communities in the valley of Oaxaca, the dangerous and risky act of emigrating can be assimilated and perceived as an extension of community living beyond the borders of the village. Nevertheless, emigrating to Mexico City or the U.S. reflects the incapacity of the local economy to provide individuals as well as the community with the material means to pursue their interests in life.

Additionally, the entitlement systems and rights appear tenuous given that the economy of Mexico depends on the conditions of external markets in order to sell its primary products, which tend to deteriorate in comparison to the prices of manufactured products. For instance, in 1992 and 1993 the federal government sought, (due to the NAFTA agreement), to replace the basic crops of Chiapaneco households, (corn, coffee and beans) with alternative crops that could more easily be commercialized and were more competitive.[116] The process therefore involved a shift of crops, and an increasing vulnerability and dependency of Chiapaneco farm workers on global regulations and international price fluctuations.

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[116] A study published by the Center of Information and Analysis in Chiapas has shown strong evidence of the non-desirable effects of the implementation of the free trade agreement in agriculture practices in Chiapas. See Adolfo Ocampo Guzmán, *La economía Chiapaneca ante el Tratado de Libre Comercio*, (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México: Centro de Información y Análisis, A.C. 1999)

Exclusion, Entitlement Failure, and the Process of Disengagement

The exclusionist nature of both globalization and entitlement failure constitute parts of a single process. It is the dynamics of accumulation and enrichment which pressures for expansion of more markets and a double share for powerful actors. The process, however, does not occur in a vacuum. As powerful players in the market demand greater security to ensure capital flow, investments, etc., through modernization reforms, this in turn necessitates legislative support and thus the legal framework is adapted to the needs of the markets. Then, a further step is taken; the aspects of the legal system which provide for the protection of entitlements tend to be modified or ended. For instance, recently in the Mexican market powerful foreign investing groups have obtained an overwhelming, though legal, presence in the financial arena, (most of the banking system is owned by foreign investors), as well as in the markets. Parallel to this, the majority of Mexican companies have been marginalized, losing markets, and consequently lowering wages and being unable to provide the benefits for their workers which are required by law. In the end, powerful players reap immense fortunes while increasing numbers of workers and greater proportions of the population are forced to deal with unemployment and low wages.[117]

In addition to the worsening of an existing disengagement process, the failure of entitlement to the land, rights to health, pensions, etc., can fuel a latent conflict already present, which has been the case in Chiapas. This occurs because at the heart of this process of enrichment and impoverishment, political power is at

[117] The most important financial corporations in Mexico are Santander- Serfin, HSBC, Scotiabank-Inverlat, Banorte, BBVA-Bancomer and Citigroup Banamex, which are mostly foreign-owned financial entities. The impressive increase of 30% in benefits per quarter , has to do with the freedom of being able to charge credit card holders an average of 40% interest rates (double or triple the interest rates these groups are able to charge in their countries of origin) while paying to savers an average of 2% interest. *La Jornada*, 26 April, 2006.

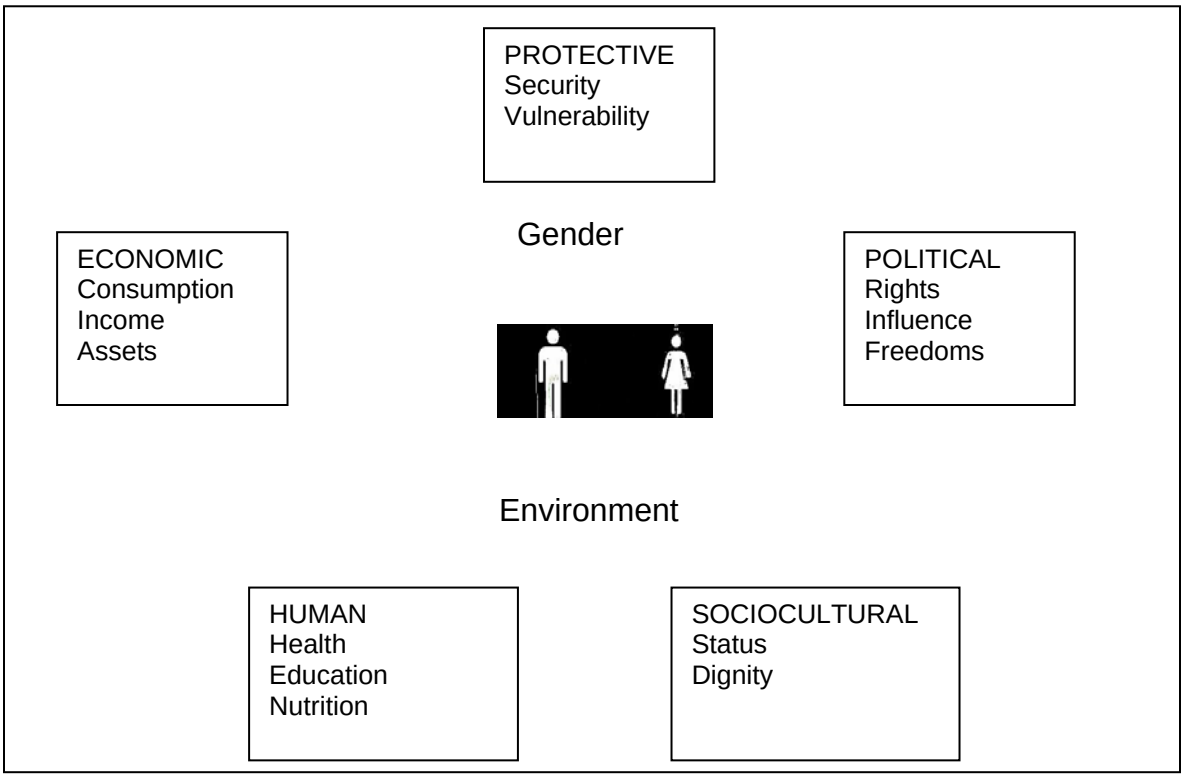
work. This power is obtained by the deliberate action of some actors who strive to increase their wealth and prevent others from doing the same. Political power is used to alter the rules of the game in order to allow a legal paradise for some actors, which results in entitlement failure for others. Consequently, although it is true that globalization stimulates new ways of inclusion, (e.g., the communication field); it is necessary to recognize that its exclusionist nature has a great impact on the vulnerable and disengaged population. The pressure exerted by globalization pushes a great proportion of the population to failure of entitlements and consequently to a failure of acquirement. Exclusion and the internal failure of acquirement can consequently explain in part the dynamics of the process of disengagement, which is by definition a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

Five Dimensions of Poverty

The process of disengagement rooted in the implementation of economic policies in Chiapas, reflects to some extent, the World Development Report 2000/2001 "Attacking Poverty", which was based on the study *Voices of the Poor,* a survey of 60,000 men and women living in poverty in 60 countries.[118] The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) has provided guidelines to help reduce poverty in 2001. According to the V*oices of the Poor Report,* poverty entails several aspects, such as powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability and fear. The study suggests that the dimensions of poverty are made up of five closely related aspects (Model 14).

[118] See *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Model 14 Five Dimensions of Poverty



According to the DAC report, since the different dimensions are linked, reducing poverty becomes a multidimensional task. Therefore, poverty reduction entails the following:

- **Economic: The poor benefit from the economy which enables them to earn a living by using the means of production and natural resources.**
- **Political-legal: The poor must have a voice in political decision-making, a decent socioeconomic legal status, economic rights and access to the public domain.**
- **Public wellbeing: People must have adequate access to health care, education, clean water and food.**
- **Socio-cultural: This includes respect for human dignity and equality, social acceptance and effective networks.**

- **Protective: Personal security and legal certainty and protection from disasters.**[119]

This multidimensional and simultaneous approach to the issue of poverty recommended by the DAC report helps to understand why one-sided solutions to poverty are most likely to fail. This is probably the case of the many single-sided anti-poverty programs launched by the Mexican government, such as *Solidaridad* (solidarity), which has ended up functioning as a political tool of the state rather than a real option to alleviate poverty. In the case of Chiapas therefore, poverty reduction in the area of economics will need to address the issue of economic security through access to markets, acquirement of material means and capabilities. Likewise, an anti-poverty program will need to take action in the area of protection, assuring personal security from violence. Additionally, in the political arena, voice, recognition and the validity of indigenous entities will represent a challenging task in poverty reduction. Furthermore, in the socio-cultural field the issues of respect and equality will have to be included in the struggle against poverty as well. Finally, the strategy to abate poverty must target the extreme conditions of deprivation in terms of health, education, housing, etc. *Overall, if the struggle against poverty is chosen as a strategy to reduce armed movements, the protection of entitlements will need to be urgently prioritized*.

A fourth and last item to be explained is the failure of mediating mechanisms to solve the conflict illustrated in Model 11. To view the implications of this process, we recall our matrix of the roots of conflicts from Chapter II, suggested by economist De Gaay Fortman. Model 15 below presents a modified version of this previous matrix. It includes the roots of the conflict and possible mechanisms that could have been useful in disabling the conflict.

[119] "Pro-Poor Growth in the Netherlands' Bilateral Partner Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategies", (The Hague: 2003)

Model 15 From Roots of Conflict to Armed Confrontation

TENDENCY TOWARD CONFLICT AND ITS ROOTS IN:	**Perceptions of indigenous and peasants groups**	**Tools for potential mediating mechanisms**: Recognition, Human protection, Dialogue, Responding to fundamental needs, Validating; Promoting trust, Accountability, Transparency, Creation of new permanent institutions.	**In the case of conflicting actions and the open escalation of armed conflict**
CULTURE	Being disregarded Resentment and fear Identity devaluation Obligated silence and suppression Dominance by elites Intergenerational sense of injustice Racism	Customary law and Indian traditions Traditional methods of conflict resolution Ethnic diversity, diversity of interests Zero tolerance of racism and discriminatory practices Promotion of culture of peace Active opposition to the use of violence	Total disregard of cultural arrangements rooted in religion and worldview and linked to identity and subsistence Failure of rights to subsistence Blockage of community activities rooted in the land
SOCIETY	Disengagement from social institutions Closed society Media blindness to diverse groups Marginality of Indian languages Pressure and forced accommodation	Social mobility Tolerance Dialogue with community leaders	Negligence of state toward the poor and unprotected. Civil, moderate and armed groups, filling in the vacuum left by the state Afflicted groups reach unbearable levels of humiliation
POLITY	Illegitimacy Disengagement from political structures People's sense of being owned by the state Lack of accountability Democracy for the rich and powerful Impunity under the law Lack of human security	Political process through traditions Transparency Social contract Political representation & participation in policy making Dialogue on presidential decrees Process for solving claims	Governing crises High levels of repression and impunity Increasing human rights violations and impunity Military presence Loss of trust Presence of paramilitary groups
ECONOMY	Disengagement from full participation and benefits Deprivation Favoring competition over cooperation	Work of independent organizations that sought credit and support to work the land. Protection of guaranteed prices, subsidies and conditions	Lack of material means to live with dignity Dismantling of institutional and household capabilities Failure of the right to subsistence Food insecurity

Although variables in Model 15 may appear to be a complicated scenario and therefore a difficult situation to approach, Galtung (1996) has suggested a simplifying process to understand the existence of a conflict. According to Galtung, we need to focus on three areas in our attempt to understand the nature of a conflict. First we need to distinguish elements of the conflict that are due to structures which usually ignore or disregard the needs of the population. Second we need to identify the cultural elements that promote and legitimize the use of violence. Lastly we need to focus on the actors because of their inability to approach conflicts without violence. Our task is therefore to concentrate on the economic, political and public structures that bear responsibility toward the society yet neglect their duties.

We close this chapter with a final argument that includes elements of analysis already discussed up to this point. We argue that in the case of Mexico, the concept of development already used in economic literature needs to be reassessed.

The roots of the concept of development can be found in the notion of progress at the end of the 18th century, when the idea of progress and perfectionism from western civilization became understood as the goal of human civilization. Yet the concept of progress implied technological and scientific advances, and was therefore not an inevitable and inherent virtue of all societies, but a positive value and characteristic of western civilization (Castoriadis 1980). It was not until after World War II that the concept of development became widely known. During the Cold War period concepts such as development, modernization, underdevelopment and the third world were constructed. It was during this period that the U.S and the Soviet Union tried to influence other regions of the world through their two models of progress, their two ways of reorganizing society. The advancement of what is now commonly known as development and progress was legitimized as a strategy in the rivalry between these two powers.

Bretton Woods and the birth of the IMF, the World Bank and the Food and Agricultural Organization in 1945 provided the framework of “technical assistance” to, (as President Truman put it), the “underdeveloped areas” of the world. Underdevelopment compressed the great cultural, political and social diversity of the globe. The path officially stated for these societies was "production and productivity" in order to achieve “prosperity and peace”. In this respect Sachs argues that the idea of defining the world as an economic arena was completely new.

> A new world-view had found its succinct definition: The degree of civilization in a country could be measured by the level of its production. There was no longer any reason to limit the domain of development to resources only. From now on, people and whole societies could, or even should, be seen as the objects of development (Sachs 1990: 157-58).

For the purpose of this work consequently, this concept, which can be distinguished as “productivity-prosperity-peace” development, needs to be replaced with a concept derived from the situation of Chiapas itself. This concept of development could be the basis on which to construct sound economic policies for the region. The following items suggest the required elements of this concept of development.

a. Inclusion of mediation mechanism and consensus
b. Capability oriented
c. Prioritize engagement process/multidimensional approach
d. Affirmation of people’s initiatives/promotion of self-confidence
e. Dominance free
f. Protective of rights and entitlements
g. Rooted in culture/respect

It is not difficult to notice that all of these needed elements assume both an active participation of people, and the state as an active guarantor of a sustainable peace process.

Our concept of development provides room for a process for empowerment, confidence and respect of the people. The idea of development needs to be engaged in the daily lives of people; overcoming disengagement, acquirement failure and the effects of exclusion. The dignity of people can serve as a clear guide in our search for a suitable process of development in the region; not only in the area of economics but also in the area of protection, politics, culture and the application of the law. The following is a useful example. As we have seen previously, entitlements and rights can flow not only from the heart of a community, but also from the state, which in turn can interfere with the community. What should occur when the institutional law which flows from the Mexican state overrides customary law, laying the groundwork for a new conflict? In such a case both systems of law could meet and agree on a common desire and goal that can benefit the people and honor their dignity. The macro economy is distinctly yet another challenge. What elements are needed in order for the macro economy to nurture an inner economy that empowers people and promotes their dignity? In our search for a possible answer, we begin by asking ourselves what this type of economy would look like at a local level. Following the Zapatista revolt a series of proposals and negotiations have unfolded. Our main focus is the initiatives of the people and their contributions toward the building of an economy of dignity.

Chapter V

Toward a Political Economy of Dignity: The Search for an Alternative to Exclusion and Acquirement Failure

In noting the reasons for and the dynamics of rebellions in Chiapas in Chapter II, we studied different theoretical approaches of the roots of rebellions. We concluded that the existence of a conflict entails multidimensional facets (economic, social, political and cultural), which clearly go far beyond a single economic reason such as poverty. The reoccurring cyclical appearances of armed groups have been signs of this ongoing, below-the-surface conflict. Chapter III led us to an understanding of the effects of colonialism, the effects of disregarding true-to-culture economics, the importance of intergenerational injustices, and the loss of legitimacy leading to the Chiapas uprising. We also underlined the existence of a process of multiple disengagement, the alliances of civil and armed groups, disillusionment, and acknowledgment by the oppressed population of the irresponsibility of powerful groups whose actions created conditions of oppression for the many.

In studying the economic factors behind the rebellion we noted that the orientation of the Mexican economy was historically toward higher levels of production, industrialization, and modernization. In the 1930's when the export-oriented economy failed due to the greatly decreased demand for Mexican goods from the United States during the Great Depression, Mexican economic advisors placed their bets on import substitution. Later when national oil reserves were discovered, the decisions of Mexican policy makers to accept offered foreign loans were based on their expectations of the extraction of petroleum, in order to advance in the race toward development. However, it was not until the debt crisis of 1982 that the economy was rigorously oriented toward fulfilling the expectations of financing institutions, and by so doing, sacrificing or sabotaging the foundations of the local economy, which were expressed in a variety of economic arrangements and entitlement systems.

Due to certain economic practices mainly carried out in some communities in southern Mexico, we observed a *true-to-culture* profile and particular economic arrangements oriented toward internal sustainability. We then made a distinction between this

type of economic practices within the inner-oriented economy and those of the outer-oriented economy.

The first type of economics is distinguished by its orientation toward the growth of local markets for the improvement, quality and preservation of and care for the land, human, social, and cultural capital. The inner-oriented economy we argued was mainly focused on these goals not necessarily as a means to reach higher levels of national output production, but as legitimate targets in themselves. The outer-oriented economy, on the other hand, was distinguished by its interest in reaching continually higher levels of production through innovations in competitiveness, efficiency and productivity. Between 1982 and 1994, through the adoption of radical economic policies, we argued that Mexico demonstrated the most drastic characteristics of an outer-oriented economy driven by the desire for external restoration of confidence, stability, and attractiveness to foreign investment.

We then suggested that the Zapatista uprising could be understood as an attempt to save the *ultimate means of protection of a inner-oriented economy, (expressed in economic arrangements that are rooted in the culture), an economy that was serving human needs, and if preserved and expanded, could serve human needs not just in Chiapas but in the region and in other indigenous regions, protecting them from the effects of an outer-oriented economy focused mainly on achieving good standing externally.* We concluded also that from 1982-1994 aggressive economic policies were implemented toward the rapid improvement of the international image of Mexico. This process was facilitated through legal as well as social and political modifications of structure. As a result, a process of deregulation, privatization, balanced public finance, re-negotiation of external debt, facilitation for foreign investment and the development of trade agreements was possible.

Through our search in Chapter IV we also gained a general view of the high levels of marginalization and low human

development levels in the southern states of Mexico. Nevertheless, through valuable observations we found evidence of economic arrangements which confirmed the existence of a fragile entitlement system, and at the same time clear signs of a vigorous economy guided by principles of reciprocity and cooperation. The economic practices with an orientation toward the survival of the community brought us to conclude the existence of a dynamic *living economy*. Consequently, in light of the Zapatista rebellion, we argued that below the surface of the rebellion lay a repressed living economy expressed in an acute condition of *disengagement,* whose center was marked by an *unbearable sense of humiliation* by the people involved. Two sources of stress that have aggravated this scenario were then suggested: the effects of an enduring *exclusion* and the manifestation of a *failure of entitlements*. This multiple social, political and economic disarticulation was expressed in the abating access to justice, security, economic means, and the lack of access to communal land and human rights, creating in the hearts and minds of the rebels a sense of being sentenced to death unless other actions were taken. We suggested therefore that the uprising and the Zapatista movement which followed could also be interpreted *as a response from a movement that found no other alternative than to try to protect core and ultimate entitlements and rights from below.* Consequently, the dynamics of the rebellion as it moved upwards from a latent conflict to an open conflict must be understood by the acuteness of the process of disengagement combined with a disregard of the true-to-culture economy, the pre-uprising elements, and finally the failure of mediating mechanisms. Although it can be argued that the condition of multiple deprivations prior to the Zapatista uprising was unique in that it preceded a major armed rebellion, the continuing, persistent levels of deprivation, marginalization and low human development in the region have been confirmed by more recent studies (Conapo Report and the 2004 Human Development Report).

This scenario leads us unavoidably to confront the issues of deterioration of entitlements, exclusion, the process of disengagement, and in general, a living economy which struggles to flourish in the midst of globalization.

We suggest that we begin our search under section A by first identifying three internal common links among the main findings on the dynamics of the Zapatista rebellion. We propose that *recognition* be our first internal common link and area of analysis to which other elements can be subscribed. Recognition is presented in our first section A.1 as a connecting link to the issues of the disregarded living economy, the exclusion of indigenous peoples from the project of the nation, the lack of access to *justice* and additionally, the issue of equality before the law. Our proposed second theme in section A.2 is the *protection of rights and entitlements*. Here we subscribe the issues of protection of the struggle for rights to the land and property tenure, which are linked to rebellions, and in general, we attempt to identify related, standing demands to be included in our alternative scenario. Our third proposed theme presented in section A.3, is *human security.* Under this topic we discuss the lack of protection, the issue of impunity, violence and the violation of human rights. In section B we address central issues concerning the building of sustainable livelihoods and capacities and the fundamental areas to be considered for an alternative economic scenario. We analyze in section B.1 the issue of capacities and sustainability as pre-requisites to achieve the removal of constraints that people experience to the emergence of sustainable livelihoods. In the same vein, section B.2 explores the topic of regaining cultural control.

Section C recapitulates our main issues and identifies two existing elements which may function as stepping stones toward an alternative re-arranged scenario. Finally, section D attempts to articulate the general search (expressed in different ways) by the people in the region for an alternative scenario which corresponds to their needs and vision. This section attempts to draw such a scenario based on existing proposals emerging from the region as

well as existing economic practices and key elements within the indigenous struggle. It sets forward an argument for an alternative socio-economic and political framework for the region that could incorporate *key demands or grievances* that stand at the root of the conflict. Our social, economic and political findings on the Zapatista uprising fall within a wide range of subjects, and obligate us to articulate them within the framework of political economy. Therefore, our plea for an alternative re-arranged economic process and structure entails topics within the field of political economy. This approach will allow us to deal with issues of production, distribution, wealth, power structures, growth, etc.

A. Main Findings of the Zapatista Rebellion

A.1 The Struggle for Recognition

A lack of recognition has historically been the plight of indigenous peoples. Though recognition is a *process* that has achieved some successes, it has remained a major pending issue. In practice recognition is an act of *inclusion* of these actors within the national project of Mexico. Inclusion begins as the government recognizes that the extreme situation of multi-dimensional disengagement of indigenous peoples, as in the case of Chiapas, is a result of the historical *exclusion* of indigenous people and peasants from the national project. Recognition is a vital part of the struggle within the broader process of *restitution*.

Second, recognition and inclusion can also bring about *affirmation,* a fundamental human need for our sense of belongingness and confidence. To return the responsibility for development to the hands of indigenous people is, in fact, to honor, affirm and recognize the ability and capacity of the people to build enduring livelihoods. This implies that these livelihoods rest in the already-existing, strategic wisdom of indigenous peoples. The

transition from resisting exclusion to the designing of a livelihood starts, therefore, with recognition.

The third benefit of recognition is the reduction of social inequality as inclusion takes root and previously resource-deprived groups obtain access to their resources. In a recently tested study, Besançon has demonstrated that countries seeking a reduction in intra-state violence need to move beyond income equality to a full *inclusion* of discriminated groups of people into the political process and distribution of public goods.[120]

Finally, recognition identifies indigenous peoples as *right-bearers* and consequently as *deserving* recipients of the protection afforded by the law under the Constitution. In contrast, the denial that indigenous peoples and peasant communities are agents with legitimated rights, will feed a condition of constant struggle. Under the present circumstances as in the past, based on the principle of dignity, indigenous and peasant groups will continue to exercise *their right to conflict* in order to be recognized. As Rawls has pointed out, the legitimacy of this right rests on the assurance that by keeping a sense of justice alive, the few will not be subjugated by the many. If this *right to conflict* is lost due to suppression, it will result in the creation of a deep and unbearable internal contradiction in the society (Rawls 2003).

Furthermore, we should not be surprised by the perception of indigenous peoples that the current juridical process is exclusionist and, to a certain extent, illegitimate. The effects of the exclusion of indigenous peoples in the consolidation of the Mexican state are still present. The indigenous perception echoes in Foucault's work, where he affirms that juridical structures need to be understood by their origin. These structures, he argues, originated in the West and were built and designed under royal pressure in which the central figure was the crown. In essence the legal system was a tool of domination; created to make the dynamics of the relationship of

[120] Marie Besançon,. "Relative Resources: Inequality in Ethnic Wars, Revolutions and Genocides." *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 4 (2005): 393-415.

domination operate effectively: it was a commissioned work to be carried out.[121]

[121] Michael Foucault, *Genealogía del Racismo* (La Plata, Argentina: Editorial Altamira, 1996)

Recognition and the Likelihood of Armed Rebellions

Although guerrilla groups have been and continue to be active in the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, and in spite of similar ethno-political activism and socio-economic conditions between these two states, Chiapas has suffered, up to this time, the greatest polarization of its peasantry and society. This raises the question of what reasons might exist that would cause a *common latent conflict* in Chiapas to surface mainly as an armed movement after a prolonged and unfruitful peaceful struggle, whereas in Oaxaca, guerrilla groups have not been successful in gaining much support and the struggle in Oaxaca has been mostly unarmed. The following observations can help us answer this question.
The Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), with 30 years of underground guerrilla experience, is the product of fusions of various guerilla movements.[122] The EPR has operated in different parts of the country and is now known to operate in the state of Oaxaca. The strategy of this revolutionary group is to call for a prolonged popular war. The EPR defines its goal as an armed struggle to create the necessary social and political conditions to establish a socialist government in Mexico. The EPR has assimilated the ideology of Peru's Shining Path, with which it has been in contact in the past, and has attempted to gain popular support, hoping to effectively convert the frustration and desperation of peasants into a violent action in the state of Oaxaca. Its efforts however, have borne no fruit. For instance, when this

[122] The formation of the EPR was the product of fusions of different guerilla movements, such as the Partido Democrático Popular Revolucionario (PDPR), Comando Francisco Villa (CFV), Comando Morelos (CM), Comandos Armados Mexicanos (CAM), Brigada Vicente Guerrero (BVG), Brigada Genaro Vázques (BGV), Brigada Obrera de Autodefensa (BOA); Brigada 18 de Mayo (B18MAYO), Brigada Campesina de Ajusticiamiento (BCA), Organización Obrera Ricardo Flores Magón (OORFM), Organización Revolucionario del Pueblo (ORP), Partido Revolucionario Obrero Clandestino-Unión del Pueblo (PROCUP), and Partido de los Pobres (PDLP). See Jorge Fernández Menéndez, *El Otro Poder: Las redes de narcotráfico, la política y la violencia en México* (Mexico City: Nuevo Siglo Aguilar, 2001)

group tried to take over "La Crucecita" and Tlaxiaco on the coast of Oaxaca, the group engaged in a confrontation with the police and army, and members of the EPR were abandoned by the people who had initially supported them (Fernández Menéndez 2001). The reason for this reluctance to join a guerrilla movement in Oaxaca on the part of peasants has not been due to a lack of guerrilla presence or lack of opportunity and must be sought elsewhere.

It is argued here that there are three main differences that could explain the lack of success of armed groups in Oaxaca. The first is the presence of an ongoing process, although limited, of the *recognition* of the political rights of indigenous communities. This process has been achieved through a strong presence of ethno-political activity in Oaxaca, and has achieved a modification of the state's Constitution. From 1986 to 1992 the state of Oaxaca engaged in a discussion with experts and the Oaxacan society concerning the recognition of the pluralistic and multi-ethnic features of the state of Oaxaca. (Oaxaca contains 16 of the 56 indigenous peoples of Mexico.) Prior to the recognition of the multi-ethnic nature of Mexican society by the federal government in 1992, the government of the state of Oaxaca had already recognized the multi-ethnic and pluralistic society of its state, modifying Article XVI of the state's Constitution in 1990.[123] A key message of the modified article expresses the wish *to recognize and respect in its entirety the dignity of the Indian groups of the state*. A resulting benefit is that in the 570 municipalities in Oaxaca, indigenous people have had more participation in the majority of the municipalities, unlike the current situation of Indian villages in Chiapas. This has been labeled a "deconstruction process" of the 500 years of exclusion and the practice of *internal colonialism* (Recondo 2001).

Secondly, indigenous peoples and peasants in the valley of Oaxaca have surprisingly described government agrarian reform as

[123] See *Ley de Derechos de los Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas*. (Oaxaca, Oax.,: Secretaría de Asuntos Indígenas, Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Oaxaca, 2001)

a positive experience. Unlike the Tojolabals, Tzeltals and Tzotzils in Chiapas, both during and after colonialism the Zapotecs in Oaxaca have been able to hold their lands longer and have used Spanish and colonial laws to achieve this. In fact, most of the historical conflicts over land in Oaxaca have occurred *among* indigenous peoples and not *between* indigenous peoples and the state (Lynn 2002). In consequence, persistent land conflict, as seen in Chiapas, has not been translated recently into a violent rebellion in the state of Oaxaca. A fundamental reason for this, we argue, is that by 1994 Oaxaca had a legal system that at least officially embraced and affirmed the rights of and respect for cultural identity, diversity, and autonomous indigenous collectivities in Oaxaca. State constitutional reforms have fallen short of the demands of multiple civil organizations throughout the state. Yet this first step *has* awakened a sense of *restitution* and *dignity* on one hand, and imbued the state, (that is until the recent conflict), with a certain level of legitimacy, in spite of the existence of growing rural and urban conflicts.[124]

The 2006 conflict in Oaxaca is a topic that itself is deserving of research and cannot be fairly addressed in this study due to our limitations. However, it is important to briefly introduce some of the relevant facts. The conflict began with a state-wide public teachers strike in May 2006. The labor union of 77,000 teachers demanded fair wages and increased state funding for education, including school breakfasts for children, shoes, clothing and school supplies for the most deprived, in addition to other demands. On June 14 a massive repression was ordered by the governor against the striking teachers who were camping in the streets of the central downtown area of Oaxaca. As a consequence of the unjustified and excessive use of force, the strike grew into a state-wide civil movement, with many organizations and civic groups uniting

[124] In 2005, 400 agrarian conflicts were detected in the state of Oaxaca by the state government. Out of these 400 conflicts, 31 were classified as high risk conflicts, 38 of medium risk and 331 as "ordinary conflicts". This classification was made based on the level of complexity and risk of violence. See *Noticias,* November 20, 2005.

under the umbrella of the newly-created Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca--APPO, (Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca). The killing of demonstrators and the imprisonment of activists and teachers followed, deepening the conflict in a state which already contained multiple unresolved conflicts and evidenced much discontent over the repression directed against leaders of civil organizations.[125] An unexpected civil solidarity and mobilization supporting the movement has emerged. Currently the movement contains hundreds of civil organizations, including indigenous, student, and women's organizations. Interestingly, among the most notable of the organized events launched by this movement have been the creation of street markets and the attempts to restore traditional economic arrangements and the *Guelaguetza.*[126]

Third, although legal embracement has not been accompanied by a desired degree of economic empowerment, the political achievements in juridical terms have been a proof of the tremendous *ethno-political* work of indigenous and peasant organizations in Oaxaca. Such political work has functioned as a mediating mechanism which has neutralized or inhibited, in one way or another, an uprising similar to the one in the neighboring

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[125] Among the various affected organizations are: Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca, whose leader left in exile; Coordinadora Oaxaqueña Magonista Popular Antineoliberal, with seven of its leaders detained; Movimiento Ciudadano Juquileño, with 69 detained leaders; Frente Popular Revolucionario, with 5 detained leaders; CODEP, whose leader was detained during a peaceful demonstration next to the Supreme Justice Committee; Organización Indígena de Derechos Humanos de Oaxaca, whose leader was detained as he was attending a nonexistent meeting "organized" by government officials. Other organizations with similar experiences are the Comité de Defensa Ciudadana, Ayuntamiento Popular de San Blas Atempa, Frente Amplio de Lucha Popular, CROCUT, and CODEMI. Additionally, citizens and organizations have voiced many grievances over the numerous remodeling projects of symbolic and historic sites around the city of Oaxaca, which are being carried out in spite of overwhelming opposition by civil organizations and the public in general.

[126] The annual indigenous festivities of the Guelaguetza (sharing) had been organized for centuries by the common people as free and open to the public and having indigenous leadership. More recently government officials have transformed the Guelaguetza into commercial tourist-centered festivities that are organized and tightly controlled by the government in conjunction with hotel chains, airlines and other powerful economic actors in Oaxaca. In the desire to restore its true meaning to the festivities, the APPO and the teacher's union organized a Guelaguetza of folk music and folk dancing in a stadium that was again free-of-charge and open to the public.

state of Chiapas.[127] This scenario suggests that recognition plays a vital role in the understanding of why armed movements can either succeed or be disabled. In the meantime, the high social, political, and economic costs of dealing with a neglected condition (which springs from the lack of recognition in Chiapas) will have to be paid. Unrecognized sectors of society will continue demanding recognition and dedicating resources and creativity to protest the current situation. In turn the state will continue increasing expenditures on the policing and militarization of the region for security reasons.

The effects of a lack of recognition will continue to deteriorate what the United Nations has described as *human capital* (the knowledge, capacity, skills and adaptive strategies of people), and *social capital* (government structures, decision-making power, community institutions, culture and the participatory process)[128]. Furthermore, moving in the direction of recognizing indigenous legitimacy and coming to terms with the historical, latent conflict in Mexico appear to be fundamental steps to reinforcing and consolidating a foundation for the building of democracy in Mexico. The latent conflict represents one of the most important tests for the Mexican democratic process--namely the treatment of the weakest and most vulnerable portion of the Mexican population.

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[127] In the 1980s Oaxaca experienced a second wave of ethno-political organizations, among which we have identified the following: Organización de de Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Desarrollo Social de la Sierra Juárez (Odresanil), Comité Coordinador para la Defensa de los Recursos Naturales Humanos y Culturales de la Región Mixe (Codremi), Asamblea de Autoridades Zapotecas , Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona Norte del Istmo (Ucizoni); Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Costa "Cien Años de Soledad" (UCI), Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo (UCIRI), la Asamblea de Autoridades Zapotecas y Chinantecas de la Sierra (Asazchis), Servicios del Pueblo Mixe (SER), Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Juaréz de Oaxaca (UNOSJO), Consejo Regional Chinanteco, Mazateco, Cuicateco (Corechimac), Organización Indígena para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en Oaxaca (OIDHO), Unión de Comunidades Indígenas del Istmo de Tehuantepec, A.C. (Ucitat). See Jorge Hernández Díaz, "Las Organizaciones indígenas en Oaxaca" in Bartolomé Miguel and Barabas Alicia, *Autonomías étnicas y estados nacionales*, México D.F: CONACULTA, 1998.

[128] The concept of social capital has been attributed to the works of Pierre Bourdieu and became propagated by the work of James Coleman in the 1980s. In the 1990's the World Bank made it a subject of research. See http://www1.worldbank.org/prem/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm. Human capital is defined as people and their ability to be economically productive. Education, training, and health can help increase human capital. See http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/modules/glossary.htm1

Recognition and the Inner-Oriented Economy

We retake our findings on the nature of the outer-oriented and inner-oriented economies discussed previously. As we have already explained, this latter type of economic process, (directed toward caring and nurturing, but with a de-emphasis on a continuing expansion of material production or the size of the economy), faces a choice. Similar to the outer-oriented economy, the inner-oriented economy also requires outlets in order to export, sell, invest, and continue existing. A second distinction, therefore, can be made in the analysis of these types of economies based on the distinct route each chooses to pursue development. The orientation of the economy in any given way will be determined by whether the poor are agents of development or are subordinated to the economic agenda of other more powerful actors. As can be seen, the inner economy grows toward the expansion of local and regional economic arrangements, aiming for the protection of nature and in general the creation of an economy that serves the common good. In contrast, the outer-oriented economy directs all energies toward increasing levels of production, or more specifically, the level of exports.

Different paths of development will naturally lead to different outcomes. De Gaay Fortman (2002) has identified two different routes which can determine the type of outcome. The first route is dominated by guidelines of the "pro-poor growth" (PPG) initiative launched by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This initiative views economic growth as the fundamental condition in order to reduce poverty and generate opportunity. Consequently, in spite of the fact that in the phrase "pro-poor growth", the word order is first "pro-poor" and second "growth", growth nevertheless stands as the first aim. On this route the economy is oriented toward higher rates of growth with the desire of improving the living conditions of the poor. This economic process, though increasing productivity and generating income for the poor, neglects vital issues such as the improvement

of redistribution of the benefits of growth and an active *protection* of the poor.[129] In contrast to this orientation of the economy, a second alternative can be pursued: the design of economic policies aimed to protect and improve the livelihoods of the poor, a process which De Gaay Fortman labels *growth pro-poor* or what we will call *Growth by the Poor* (GBP). This entails growth that does not contribute to a worsening of the income distribution or in the poverty head account and is carried out mainly *by the poor*. Growth of this nature can create assets for the poor as they themselves are the main recipients of the increasing benefits of growth in terms of education and health. Additionally, this type of growth facilitates transformation by the dynamic expansion of peoples' initiatives to improve their daily lives.[130]

In the case of Mexico it is worth noting that the struggle for recognition and restitution of autonomy, which comes from the most marginalized sector of the population, reveals an even deeper point of tension. This tension is centered on the difference between a Mesoamerican *internally-oriented, growth by the poor economy, directed to protect daily livelihoods, participation, protection of entitlements and the expansion of sustainable home markets based on participation and in harmony with communal cultural values,* and an *externally-oriented, pro-poor economy, oriented toward the increasing of exports, the size of foreign investment, and*

[129] According to De Gaay Fortman, protection implies that law understood as an active " process of finding and deciding in an orderly manner what is right" is at work "ensuring an orderly protection of interest and orderly settlement of disputes arising out of conflicting interest…thus, law regulates and delimits power" See Bas De Gaay Fortman, *Power and Protection, Productivism and the Poor*. (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 2002)

[130] We can see some evidence of the outcomes of a Pro-Poor Growth initiative. As Pro-Poor Growth policies take effect and the economy is fixed on increasing levels of productivity and efficiency, (e.g., in energy), unpleasant outcomes for the poor increase. As this production-oriented economy carries out mega-projects such increasing number of dams in Chiapas, peasants are removed from their habitat without compensations, and frequently suffer from lack of access to water, (even when mega-projects are built with hopes of improving access to water in the area). As De Gaay Fortman has pointed out, two effects of a productivistic mindset in agriculture are further examples. One is the removal of peasants from an economy of subsistence, who move to jobs in the industrial sector while having no socio-economic protection, feeding the process of marginalization. In addition, the promotion of increasing productivity in large-scale activities, such as in the coffee industry, does not necessarily imply a promotion of guaranteed prices and access to markets. Consequently, it is possible for productivity to result in the surplus of a single, unsold product due to barriers created in wealthier countries.

mainly the material growth size of the economy by the means of private accumulation, higher productivity and competition. In other words, using Polany's distinction of economic systems introduced in the preceding chapter, the problems of recognition, autonomy and restitution are evidence of a profound contention between two economic systems, one mainly oriented by markets and market values and the other mainly oriented by reciprocity, cooperation and guided by community values.

The interpretation of the Mexican economy as a series of arrangements that spring from two different types of economies implies the existence of points of contradiction. We see the inner-economy in tension with but also complementing the outer economy, having a variety of distinct forms yet all bearing a particularly Mexican expression of "doing business". However, the points of tension can offer valuable evidence to support the existence of two economies pulling toward different poles. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla described in his well known book, *Mexico profundo: una civilización negada* (Profound Mexico: a Denied Civilization), the conflict between two projects of civilization in Mexico. On one hand, the *profound Mexico*, based on Mesoamerican cultural heritage, has been perceived as an obstacle to development, an opposite process to a better life, progress and the advancement promised by the westernized *imagined Mexico.* Bonfil Batalla argues that the imagined Mexico has been a project advanced by elite, powerful actors whose ideology can be traced to its roots in European colonizers and their western culture.[131] Although this interpretation of the complex cultural scenario may run the risk of reducing Mexican cultural space to a binomial of indigenous versus non-indigenous, Mesoamerican versus European, we are interested in the distinction between two major economic trends that though they contradict each other, also overlap and complement each other.

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[131] See Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo, *México profundo: una civilización negada* (México D.F., Grijalbo, 1989)

The work of Nestor García Canclini from the National Autonomous University of Mexico has helped us to understand that the most fruitful analyses of Latin American social reality are those that focus on the interwoven nature of new social configurations. This entails new ways that actors are finding to *be* with the others and new ways of *doing* with the others, in the midst of new social and political arrangements. According to García Canclini, these analyses are highly beneficial because they highlight the new spaces for new actors--spaces for *intermediation* and *negotiation* of the existing diversity in the Latin American culture.[132] Unfruitful analyses on the other hand, view identities and cultural projects as existing in isolation while engaged in a fierce, unceasing battle against each other; e.g., identity versus globalization.

From the economic point of view, it can be said that the contemporary economy found in Mexico is a specific expression of these new ways of being and doing in the midst of globalization. Furthermore, *to claim that an economic expression grows out of isolation is unrealistic*. For instance, as we have noticed in our last chapter, *the economic practices of indigenous communities, in many ways are the result of previous or current interactions with economic processes, and the result of creative responses and answers to crises.*

The inner-economy, an economic mosaic consisting of a variety of practices, shows contrasting characteristics when compared to the outer economy. The inner-economy is more explicit and evident in the indigenous communities and their economic initiatives although it is spread across the economic space. This living economy, in spite of the impression given by economic reports of being a powerless economic arrangement, has taken on mixed forms and remained vigorous in southern Mexico, sustaining life through adaptation and subsistence, even though it remains unrecognized and devalued and thus prevented from

[132] See Nestor García Canclini, Nestor. *La globalización imaginada* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidos, 2000)

blossoming. The outer economy, on the other hand is expressed more clearly in the existence of the dominating market economy, free trade and alliances by global actors. This type of economy tends to dominate all aspects of society, exhausting existing local mechanisms for the sake of expansion. The cultural spaces, (spaces of social interaction, creativity, communications, etc.), seem to have no other choice than to orient themselves to the expectations of the market economy. The outer-oriented economy, consequently, has grown to become a fast-moving economy promoted by public authorities as well as private initiative, creating the impression in Mexican society that there is no other alternative.

A.2 Protection of Rights and Entitlements: The Main Grievances and Demands at the Center of the Latent Conflict

As in the case of recognition, the protection of both entitlements and rights also needs to be understood as an active process. The nature of this struggle speaks against the common idea of accepting economic growth alone as the fundamental condition to end poverty, inequality or exclusion in society. The process of the defense of rights as a vital strategy to reduce poverty, inequality and exclusion has been made evident in different moments of Mexican history, and can be defined as a struggle *against legality* (Klein and De Gaay Fortman 1999).[133] We understand legality as the set of regulations known and familiar to society as acceptable, and built upon a particular interpretation or enforcement of the legal framework by powerful actors in society. Yet, in spite of legality, or at times pretended legality, the application of rules remains incongruent with the societal need for social justice. Consequently, the actions of people

[133] It is important to notice that indigenous peoples in Mexico have acted based on the existing, lawful, social contract spelled out in the Mexican Constitution regarding the protection of communal land. However, their struggle has also been centered on the issue of the historical exclusion of indigenous peoples from the project of a nation and state in Mexico.

who are guided by what they perceive *to be right* and *just*, challenge and go beyond the existing official laws. For instance, two, well-known, elected governors in Chiapas, General Absalón Castellanos and Patrocinio Gonzales Garrido, ruled in favor of the powerful elites while operating within the legal framework. At points where the legal system proved to be a restraint to their power and desires, they were able to introduce modifications to the legal system in order to achieve their goals. It is also known that an impressive number of peasant and civil organizations jointly mobilized under a simple claim of "what was right". In the midst of a legally repressive system that allowed the arrests, disappearances and murders of community leaders, one of the goals of this mobilization was to protect the lives of those leaders and families involved in this struggle. Another goal was to defend the land, which was necessary due to a modification in the Constitution. For this reason also, the struggle for protection of rights became an extremely fierce battle against legality. As Klein and De Gaay Fortman have pointed out, the struggle for dignity, perceived at the grassroots level as legitimized, is a revolt against legality. Consequently, in southern Mexico, the struggle for control of the decision making that affects the life of people, which is necessary in order to protect a wide range of fundamental needs, (for example subsistence, language, culture), has gained greater urgency and importance than respecting legal limitations. Therefore, although the struggle in Chiapas acted within the law by defending rights to the communal land which was protected by the Mexican Constitution, its continuing struggle reveals a deeper demand: the honoring of the moral right to be included in the project of the nation; that is, to be recognized within the legal framework of the Mexican nation.

The reappearing three constant themes of the latent conflict of long duration discussed in Chapter III, (autonomy, erosion of the legitimacy of rulers and the cry for restitution), point to the fact that rebellions tend to seek the reestablishment of previous and

familiar entitlements and conditions, in addition to on a deeper level, struggles for inclusion.

A.3 Main Issues Related to Human Security

The concept of human security was first presented in the works of the Pakistani founder of the United Nations Development Reports (UNDR), Mahbub ul Haq, who proposed that instead of the traditional understanding of security as the protection of territory or national boundaries, (a concern attributed to nation-states), security be centered on people. Human security therefore views security from the perspective of people, entailing protection from threat, disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards. For example, the 2006 Elgar Companion to Development Studies states that since 1994 there has been a tendency to use the concept of human security in a more comprehensive manner within different levels, (e.g., from individual to collective security or from local to national or global security).[134] However, human security cannot be precisely defined or measured with exact indicators. Nevertheless, at a national level seven categories of human security have been identified: namely, economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, health security, and political security. Our treatment of this concept in this section as well as at the end of the chapter includes only some of these aspects which become evident in our case.

The 1994 UNDR defines the two aspects of human security: it first means protection from chronic threats such as disease, hunger and repression; and second, it means protection from unexpected hurtful events in people's daily lives. Human security

[134]Clark, David Alexander, ed. *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies.* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006). See also Georg Frerks and Berma Klein Goldewijk eds. *Human Security and International Insecurity*. (The Netherlands: Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2006).

is not a mechanism of defensiveness but an integrative concept, with its meaning emerging from the people within the dynamics of solidarity. It cannot be imposed on society by force nor exercised in a military fashion.[135] *As is true of the inner-oriented economy, security is an inner matter which emerges from the people and other actors involved, finding its own expressions according to its context. Inner security grows from the participation of civil society, creating an environment of confidence and freedom from fear. All of this is contrary to the outer type of security, which is often evaluated by the size and might of an army in relation to other external threatening military forces.*

In the spirit of the 1994 report, the 2002 report re-took the issue of human security, specifying that in order to protect human dignity and achieve development, it is vital to expand and promote a democratic process, given that the democratic process can enhance personal security and peace. Human security is also required for the nation-states to succeed in their governing roles in society. Consequently, development is inhibited in countries where the military, the police and other related groups dominate democratic institutions or are not accountable or transparent in their activities.[136] Three years later the 2005 report concluded that human security appears to be the most challenging and most difficult obstacle to development. Worldwide data suggests that humanity cannot enjoy security without having development, nor enjoy development without security.[137] As Sabina Alkire from the Commission on Human Security has stated:

> The objective of human security is to the safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, without impeding long-term human fulfillment…the term "vital core" is not meant to be precise, it suggests a minimal

[135] UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)
[136] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2002* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)
[137] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2005* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

> or basic or fundamental set of junctions related to survival, livelihood and dignity.[138]

Human security is an unavoidable issue when it has been strongly voiced by social movements, human rights organizations, religious organizations etc. Consequently, human security is included as a requirement for an alternative economic scenario in which the protection of human dignity is sought (see Model 16). We turn now to the first dimension of human security, namely, security from violence, threats and fears. Human security ensures protection from disrupting and hurtful events; while violent conflicts and their consequences disable efforts for the protection of human life. Human security is a process which requires intentional and arduous work on behalf of the government and civil society. The acute levels of marginality and low human development in the region suggest that human security cannot be totally separated from situations of high vulnerability, such as deprivation or food insecurity. In the south of Mexico, fear and economic insecurity tend to coexist. For instance, looking at the conditions prior to the open conflict in Chiapas, it can be argued that the conflict itself revealed a deeper reality in Chiapas: that of the existence of an acute state of human insecurity in terms of food, health, community, political repression and fear of abrupt hurtful changes, to the degree that lives could not continue normally. Therefore, in light of the process of disengagement presented in our last chapter, human insecurity can be seen as a reason for these multiple deprivations as well as a product of it. Human insecurity helps us understand why people cannot fulfill basic needs, and as the process continues, insecurity grows. Whether we see insecurity as a cause or a product, in the end, human insecurity remains an inseparable companion to low levels

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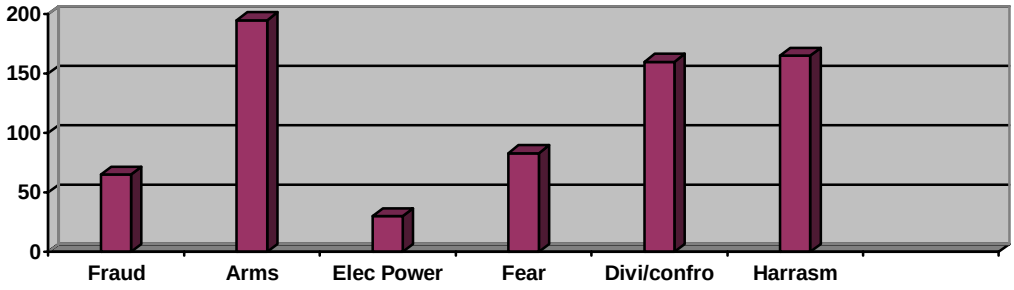
[138] Alkire, S. "A Conceptual Framework for Human Security" CRISE Working Paper 2, (Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, 2003). Cited in Gasper Des, " Securing Humanity: Situating Human Security as a Concept and Discourse" *Journal of Human Development* 6, no. 2 (July 2005): 221-245.

of human development, marginalization, and the failure of entitlement.

What indicators could be used to evaluate human security in a particular situation? A possible way is to see human security as the people within a society see it--that is by detecting its absence rather than its presence. Graph 18 shows the results of an opinion poll in Chiapas published by a non-governmental organization in 1999. CIEPAC A.C. (Center for Economic and Political Research of Community Action) carried out a survey in which the leading question asked of participants was: "What worries me the most?"

Graph 18

What Worries Me Most?
A Public Opinion Poll in Chiapas, Mexico



Source: *La Estrategia de guerra en Chiapas* (San Cristóbal de la Casas, Chiapas, México: CIEPAC Project Counseling Service, 1999).

The results of the survey showed that the three major topics of concern were the possession of arms in the hands of private groups or the army, harassment from the army, and the increasing divisions and confrontations between communities and the government. The other issues of fear, fraud and the loss of electrical power were of less concern. This survey reveals that fear itself is not the primary concern, but rather the growing generalization of the use of arms as a mean to protect rights and interests by paramilitaries, guerrilla groups, gunmen and the army.

The survey results suggest that the construction of human security requires a process of disarmament, demilitarization and the creation of mechanisms to nonviolently mediate divisions and confrontations. To understand the nature of concerns in Chiapas that were revealed in this survey, we need to briefly review some antecedents. In 1995, a year after the initial Zapatista uprising, two divergent processes began to take place. The EZLN began peace talks with the administration of President Ernesto Zedillo, which led to the signing of the San Andrés Peace Accords in 1996. Simultaneously, paramilitary groups, groups of gunmen and secret armed groups grew, contending with the EZLN's size and influence. The most widely known paramilitary organization is "Paz y Justicia" (Peace and Justice), created in 1995. In 1999 an additional 14 armed groups were identified (see Graph 4). Of all of the groups included in Graph 4, the most active has been "Paz y Justicia", which has been responsible for the majority of the aggressions, followed by the MIRA group, and the paramilitary of Chenalhó.[139]

This brings us to the question of who the paramilitaries are and how they have come into existence. Two anthropologists, Aubry Andrés and Angélica Inda, have documented the existence of 246 different paramilitary groups in seventeen sites within one region of Chiapas. In their majority, those who join these groups are young, frustrated men from families without land or means of subsistence. For them becoming a paramilitary has meant the economic security of a salary, plus the benefits obtained through the pillage of livestock, crops and other goods. On top of this, weapons offered them a place in society, with status, visibility and power which had never been gained by their families, (who had sought significance in ownership of a piece of land yet never attained it).[140]

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[139] Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, A.C. *La guerra en Chiapas: ¿Incidente en la historia?* (San Cristóbal de la Casas, Chiapas: 2000).
[140] *La Jornada*, 23 December, 1997.

Along with the increasing number of paramilitaries, the army has intensified its presence in the three poorest states of the south,[141] and the personnel within the Mexican army have reached high levels of specialization.[142] It is necessary to address the question of whether the army is responsible for violations of human rights in Chiapas. According to human rights organizations in Chiapas, the violators of human rights most frequently intimidate and make threats against the physical wellbeing of people, take away civil liberties, and make illegal detentions. Military actions also include executions, death threats, disappearances, intimidations, inflicting wounds, torture, sexual abuse, break-ins, evictions and displacement. Among the worst violators of personal security, four are especially notorious—the army, the state police, the paramilitaries and PRI militants. Almost 40% of these violations were carried out by the army, 30% by the state police, 28% by the paramilitaries and the rest by extreme militants of the PRI, the official political party.[143]

The Acteal Massacre is probably the most oustanding example of the links between the paramilitary groups and the Mexican military. It also stands as evidence of those who suffer from the violence and the power of impunity. On December 22, 1997, 45 people who were attending a prayer meeting for peace in a Catholic chapel were surrounded by paramilitary forces in the pacifist Tzotzil community of Acteal. During a period of several hours, this armed group, with the apparent consent of local Mexican army units stationed nearby, shot to death those who

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[141] As we have pointed out, the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas and Guerrero have been the recipients of 1/3 of the armed forces in Mexico. These three states contain 15% of all military zones and highly- trained military officers, (graduates of the School of the Americas in the United States) have been stationed there. See G. Castro and E. Ledesma, *Siempre cerca, siempre lejos: las fuerzas armadas en México* Mexico: (Global Exchange, CIEPAC, CENCOS, 2000)

[142] In 2001 specialized groups grew rampantly in the Mexican army. These groups received training from U.S. special forces from Fort Braggs and also from highly-specialized Guatemalan groups known as *Kaibiles* (accused of human rights violations during the civil war which lasted 30 years in Guatemala), who trained state and federal army forces to counter attack subversive groups and armed guerilla groups. Overall an impressive growth and process of specialization took place between 1994 and 2000. *La Jornada*, 21June, 2001.

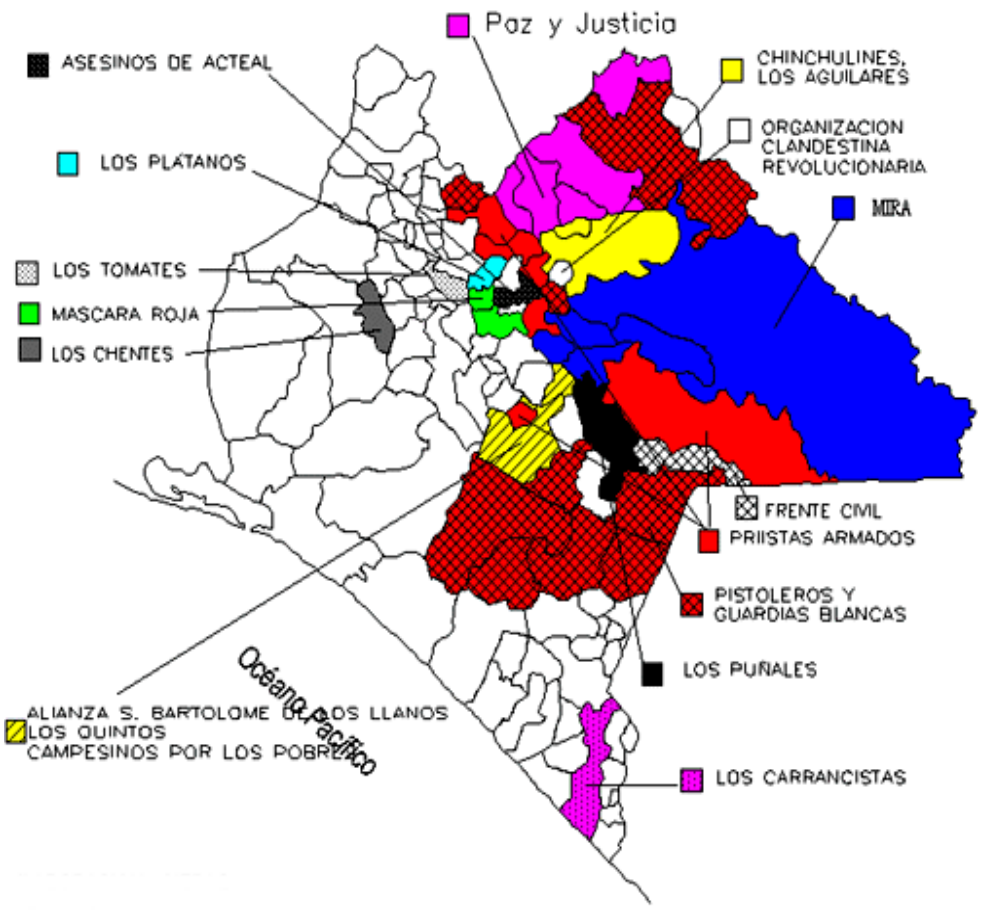
[143] Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, A.C. *La guerra en Chiapas: ¿Incidente en la historia?* (San Cristóbal de la Casas, Chiapas: 2000)

remained inside, and attempted to kill all those who tried to escape. Those murdered on that day included 15 children, 21 women (four of them pregnant) and 9 men. Some of the Catholic peace activists survived. The peace groups professed support for the goals of the EZLN; almost certainly the reason for the attack on the prayer meeting, (though the activists did distance themselves from the EZLN's methods). The killing raised much controversy over who organized and ordered the paramilitary attack. Was the attack centrally organized by the political establishment, possibly including either the governor of Chiapas, Julio César Ruiz, or by the Mexican president, or by both? Was it organized by the army without the knowledge of the political leadership? In either case, those in charge of security were discharged of any responsibility and those who carried out the killings have been set free.

In February 2005, several human rights organizations, among them the Red Nacional de Organismos "Todos los derechos para todos" (National Network of Organizations "All Rights for All"), the human rights organizations of Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, Fray Francisco de Vitoria, and the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights, issued a joint document to the Inter-American Human Rights commission, placing responsibility for the extrajudicial executions and disappearances and the rape of women committed by paramilitary groups during the presidential administrations of Salinas de Gortari and Zedillo. Both presidential administrations have actively supported the formation of paramilitary groups as a strategy to control the rebellion. It also blamed the current administration of President Vicente Fox for supporting the paramilitary groups with its silence.[144]

[144] La Jornada, February 10, 2005.

Graph 4 Gunmen and Paramilitary Groups in Chiapas



Source: CIEPAC. A.C. available from http://www.ciepac.org

Although other states in the region do not share Chiapas' intensely armed environment, Oaxaca and Guerrero do share with Chiapas a similar pattern of impunity to collective killings involving armed groups. These killings have occurred under circumstances that involve gunmen, unidentified armed squads, and paramilitaries. For instance, in Oaxaca on May 31 of 2002, 26 peasants were killed with sophisticated and powerful weapons at a site known as Agua Fría. During the search for reasons, the administration of Governor José Murat blamed the federal

government for the lack of assistance to maintain security. Similar to the massacre in Chiapas, the massacre of Agua Fría remains without clarification. In the neighboring state of Guerrero in June of 1995, 17 peasants who were traveling to a town for a demonstration affiliated with a peasant organization known as OCSS (Peasant Organization of the Southern Sierra), were massacred by police forces. The National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) confirmed the massacre, finding 20 state government officials responsible for the massacre and guilty of obscuring evidence, including Guerrero's secretary of sate and the state attorney general. Nevertheless, the case has remained closed.[145]

In addition to the issue of impunity, there are further areas of security concerns in the state of Oaxaca. There are currently 500 latent conflicts throughout the state, and Oaxaca is currently ranked first place in cases of violence against women. Not surprisingly, Oaxaca has been called "a time bomb" by the local Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights.[146]

In summary, the intensification of armed forces in the south has been justified for reasons of social order and stability, but mainly, for security reasons. Nevertheless, human rights reports suggest that the type of security extended by the federal and state government, has not properly addressed the real needs of the people in the southern states, namely, the need to be protected. On the contrary, while this strategy claims the achievement of national security, it sacrifices human security conditions which are fundamental to development. The issue of human security should not be seen as alien to the topic of development, but rather as a prerequisite for the construction of a safe environment which

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[146] See *Noticias*, 13 November, 2005. Also, "la Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos" *Noticias*, 2 March, 2005 available from www.prodigyweb.net.mx/ligamexicana/noticias/oaxacabombadetiempo.htm

[146]Carlos Montemayor, "Aguas Blancas," *La Jornada,* 28 June, 2001.

promotes confidence and the emergence of empowered livelihoods.

B. Human Development and the Building of Sustainable Livelihoods and Capacities

B.1 Capacities and Sustainability

If by development we understand the removal of constraints to the emergence of sustainable and empowered livelihoods, then we need to recognize the *capacities* needed for the community to regain control over their own livelihoods. The well-known Mexican ethno-ecologist, Victor M. Toledo, has argued in his work that the ecological crisis as we know it can be defined as humanity's loss of control over processes that affect humanity itself and its environment. True sustainability at a community level implies that communities will follow a process in order to recover five types of capacities for self-management, to have a say in factors that may have an impact on the community's life and its environment.

1. Toledo sets forth the first capacity as one of control over the community's surroundings by the *recognition* of the state regarding the community's habitat, the existing resources within its habitat, and its limits (territorial control).

2. The second capacity is control over the protection, care of and sustentation of the community's habitat through intentional plans, record of assets, and research (ecological control).

3 .The third capacity is the community's practice of determining and deciding cultural matters, such as the use and protection of language, mode of dress, the practice of traditions, knowledge, and in general, its cultural life (cultural control).

4. Fourth, the community needs the capacity to determine its social life, which includes education, food, housing, health and leisure. Parallel to this, the people in the community need to gain

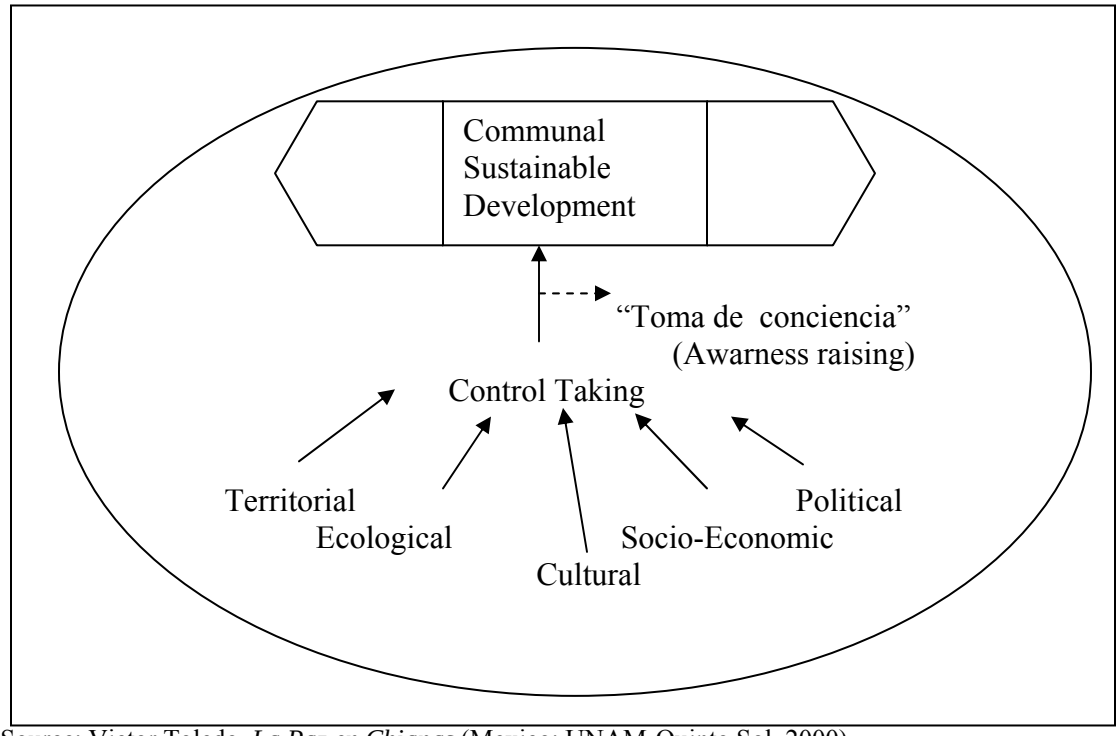
control over economic issues of the community, such as the ability to regulate commercial exchange and interaction with local as well as regional, national and international markets (socioeconomic control).

6. Sixth, the community cannot avoid the step of recovery of political power, in order to sustain its political/economic/social institutions, the application of law and norms of living.

These dimensions, Toledo argues, are complementary to each other, each requiring the others in order to be feasible. For instance, there cannot be a defense of cultural practices in the midst of destruction of the ecological habitat.

It is clear then that the issue of sustainability requires more than official assistance: it requires a process of empowerment in concrete ways, through the building of capacities (see Model 17).

Model 17 Objectives of Sustainable Community Development



Source: Victor Toledo, *La Paz en Chiapas* (Mexico: UNAM-Quinto Sol, 2000).

After the Zapatista rebellion, the concept of autonomy reemerged, dominating indigenous debate among various organizations. Three events help explain the staging of the

autonomy discourse as central to the growing debate on regaining power for the present and future generations of indigenous peoples in Mexico. The first influential event was the implementation in 1987 of an autonomous region in Nicaragua by the Sandinista government. The second factor was the higher level of mobilization and organization, which indigenous people had reached by 1992, the year in which many governments in Latin America celebrated the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, while many indigenous organizations decried the European invasion of 1492. The third influential factor was the growing struggle of the Indian population for recognition within the Constitution to more accurately express the multicultural character of the Mexican nation.[147]

Currently, the perspective of autonomy has become divided into two dominant perspectives as regards the type of autonomy to be sought. The first of these perspectives, *comunalismo,* aims for territorial, cultural, social, political and economic control at the local community level. This position has been supported by government officials and government-affiliated indigenous organizations. The second proposal, known as *regionalismo,* is a struggle to gain control beyond the community level. It envisions empowerment at a regional level as one of the most effective ways to protect economic, political and cultural rights. The regional position insists on the inevitability that the community, in its search for more autonomy, will become a political entity strong

[147] The issue of autonomy and its appearance in the Mexican political arena after the Nicaraguan experience is fully discussed by Castellanos and Lopez y Rivas. See Alicia Castellanos and López y Rivas. "Autonomías y movimiento indígena en México: debates y desafíos" in *Alteridades* 7, no. 13, 1997.

enough to face economic shocks, economic crises, and economic policies and treaties that may threaten the region/municipality/ community.[148] We now examine some of the reasons behind the desire for the pursuit of autonomy.

[148] See Diaz-Polanco, Hectór. La Rebelión Zapatista y la Autonomía. (México D.F.: Siglo veintiuno editores, 1997).

B.2 Regaining Control

An important source of human dignity is the capacity of people to stand on their own feet and make their own decisions regarding lifestyle and the values they will or will not adopt. Gillermo Bonfil Batalla (1991) has insisted on the importance of the community's ability to make decisions concerning its *own cultural elements* in order to have a level of control over the cultural process. Culture is a social phenomenon, and Bonfil argues that social capacity entails control over material elements, organizational elements, knowledge, and the symbolic or emotional elements connected to culture. Table 10 identifies four cultural scenarios that a community can face depending on its social capacity.

Table 10 Alternatives for Cultural Scenarios

CULTURAL CONTROL	*DECISIONS*	
	OWN	FOREIGN
OWN	AUTONOMOUS CULTURE	ALIENATED CULTURE
FOREIGN	APPROPRIATED CULTURE	IMPOSED CULTURE

Source: Bonfil, Batalla Guillermo, *Pensar nuestra cultura* (Mexico: Alianza Editorial, 1991)

The first option is when the cultural elements are the community's own and decisions are also their own. This desirable combination reflects the level of social capacity of the community, yielding the possibility of attaining an *autonomous culture*. To experience an autonomous culture means to hold the capacity to produce, use and reproduce chosen cultural elements, e.g., traditional medical knowledge. The second alternative, where the cultural elements are the community's own but the decisions are out of its control (foreign), would constitute an *alienated culture*. Under this situation, other people make the decisions concerning a community's cultural elements; e.g., communal land, language, and ancient celebrations. The third option, *appropriated culture*, is an acceptance of foreign cultural elements as the community's own cultural practices. This acceptance is a result of the community's own decisions. However, due to the fact that the cultural elements are foreign, people lack the capacity to produce them or reproduce them, even though the social agents can decide whether they want to use them or not; e.g., Christmas celebrations, technology, etc. The fourth alternative reflects the situation of an *imposed culture*, which emerges when neither cultural elements nor decisions are under the control of the people. Nevertheless, under this scenario the cultural elements still become part of the culture of the people, e.g., industrialized food, commercial music, pop drinks, etc.

In spite of possible weaknesses in Bonfil's description of a complex social phenomenon, two remarks can be made at this point. First, we want to highlight the driving argument behind this analysis: that apparently *empowerment* is highly connected to the desirable scenario of appropriation of cultural elements and the *capacity* to make decisions over them. Secondly, it appears that empowerment is not merely an object to be possessed, but that it exists in the exercise of *acts*, in the *practice* of the capacity or capability of people to choose the kind of lives they want to live. In conclusion we can affirm that to protect and honor human dignity, it is necessary to struggle for a less alienated and more autonomous

culture as a way of refusing to live in a powerless and alienated condition.

C. Toward a Political Economy of Dignity and the Search for an Alternative Economic Scenario for Chiapas and Southern Mexico

We now take a further step and begin the search for a possible path to overcome the current tendency of the persistent disengagement process, aggravated by exclusion, which leads to entitlement failure in southern Mexico. First, we set forward a fundamental condition for any possible alternative--the protection of *human dignity*. This fundamental condition is consistent with the type of economic system found in peasant and indigenous communities, oriented by the principles of reciprocity and cooperation which serve to maintain both social relations and survival. Next we define our notion of sustainable livelihoods. In summarizing what we have found so far, we attempt to identify the links among the specific areas already identified, (namely, recognition, protection of entitlements, human security and human development), in order to see how these areas might be in turn connected to human dignity. Finally, we identify two additional stepping stones which will lead us to the formulation of a possible scenario of development for Chiapas.

As we have pointed out earlier, at the center of the process of disengagement in Chiapas an unbearable sense of humiliation was afflicted on people. Therefore, in order to introduce our first key concept we start our search with the issue of humiliation. Previously, we have partially defined human dignity as the opposite of an act of humiliation, which cruelly destroys the capacity of people to believe in themselves and act with confidence to modify their own circumstances. In applying this definition to economics, we can say that human dignity requires the respect of the right of individuals as well as groups to take initiatives and

play an active role in the process of decision making when those decisions will bring about economic and political outcomes that will affect their lives (Martinez 2000). To deny this right, inevitably degrades the decision-making process to an instrumental practice, reducing the value of people's lives to an inferior status, subject to manipulation. Therefore, human dignity from this perspective requires the removal of structural constraints in people's daily lives in order to become both decision makers, and the constructors of a socio-economic process that uplifts human self-reliance.

From a more practical perspective we can say that dignity is deeply connected to the human need to achieve, to succeed in putting into motion a set of daily *activities to build and maintain sustainable livelihoods which uplift human dignity*. A sustainable livelihood beyond mere survival can be defined as the tangible way that capabilities, entitlements, and security can make it possible for people to live with dignity and reach higher levels of human development; that is, to experience greater freedom to live the lives people value most. *The notion of economic development therefore, can be defined as a positive change that yields control of the decisions that affect their lives into people's hands, both in terms of an inner security and an emerging inner economy which can sustain human life.* The protection and honoring of human dignity, we suggest, should guide the type of development needed. In consequence, development honors human dignity. It is through empowerment and the removal of constraints and unfreedoms that development maintains people at the center of the process, enhancing capabilities, self-reliance and the flourishing of enduring livelihoods.[149] Three aspects characterize the sustainability here envisioned.

1. The adjective *sustainable* is used to describe a livelihood that first reveals itself to be an economic arrangement which

[149] Helmore and Singh point out that sustainability of livelihoods must be resilient to be able to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses. See Helmore, Kristin and Singh, *Sustainable Livelihoods: Building on the Wealth of the Poor* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc. 2001)

sustains life in agreement with the cultural and ecological environment. For instance, as we have observed earlier, *participation*, *cooperation and reciprocity* have played important roles in the economics of indigenous communities. A sustainable livelihood, therefore, should include these organic economic principles, which have proved to be enabling for subsistence and survival.

2. Second, a sustainable livelihood is one which has the capacity of enduring economic, population or ecological crises. The debt crises of 1982 or 1994, and the austerity programs that followed the crises are examples of the types of crisis a sustainable livelihood could endure. As we have seen, the collapse of coffee, meat and other prices had a tremendous impact on household economies in Chiapas and contributed to a worsening of the scenario previous to the uprising. The effects of population growth, systematic acquirement failure, exclusion, etc., are examples of other hostile environments where sustainable livelihoods can endure.

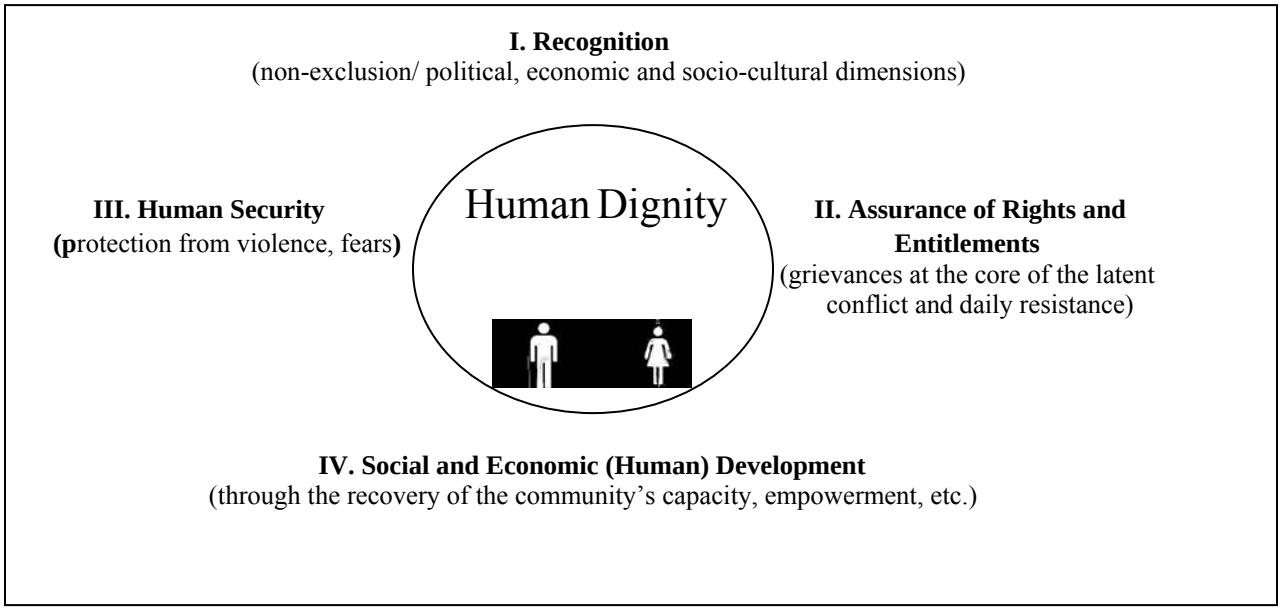
3. Finally, a sustainable livelihood achieves a place in society with recognition of rights and protection. It matures thanks to a friendly environment, serving people by satisfying human needs, counterbalancing the acute disengagement process observed in Chiapas prior the uprising.

We turn now to our discussion of the concrete and inevitable areas relating to the uplifting of human dignity. The preservation and protection of human dignity is an active process, not realized without the diligent effort of people or other agents.

In summary Model 16 illustrates four previously explored areas, (recognition, protection of entitlements, human security and human development), placing at the center the issue of human dignity. These four elements are areas in which efforts, energy and creativity can be directed to assure that people are recognized as deserving entities before the law, that their rights and entitlements are protected, that their lives are protected from violence, and that they achieve a level of human development. This type of re-

arrangement of what we consider to be the main variables in the socio-economic and political arenas also implies a feasible way to address the main issues of the conflict in Chiapas and to overcome the likelihood of future armed conflicts in the region. For instance, human dignity requires recognition, which includes individual and collective rights within the juridical framework, enabling people to actively participate in decision making and the formation of policies that affect their lives. Not surprisingly, recognition is at the center of the current struggle of indigenous peoples in Mexico.

Model 16 The Protection of Human Dignity


I. Recognition
(non-exclusion/ political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions)
III. Human Security
(protection from violence, fears)
Human Dignity
II. Assurance of Rights and Entitlements
(grievances at the core of the latent conflict and daily resistance)
IV. Social and Economic (Human) Development
(through the recovery of the community's capacity, empowerment, etc.)

However, recognition is the beginning of a process and does not imply that the other three goals will be placed on hold until recognition is obtained. Indeed, all four elements seem in fact to be prerequisites of each other. For instance, human security implies protection of people from disruptive violence and fears. Yet can this be achieved without the recognition of the rights of the people? (For the protection of human life from killings assumes the recognition of human rights and the value of human life). Not surprisingly, unrecognized or excluded groups having unequal footing before the law tend to be subjects of discrimination and violence.

Human development, on the other hand, moves beyond the goal of survival to the process of the realization of human achievements. Yet the pursuit of aspirations is not sustainable if the protection of human life, property and rights is not present. The protection of entitlements, as we have argued in our last chapter, is fundamental for human development. The work necessary to bring to fruition these four interlinked elements is greatly challenging, but nevertheless we argue that they have the ability to make the

process of empowerment and sustainable peace a feasible and durable alternative. The foundation of this proposed socio-economic and political re-arranging is active civil participation, yet this alternative scenario is of a dual nature, also requiring active governmental participation.

Two Additional Historical Stepping Stones

Under the theme of human development we have so far discussed the necessary elements or stepping stones to be considered in a possible alternative of development; namely, the role of capacities, cultural control, and the protection of human dignity. Two additional stepping stones can strengthen the foundation being laid for a possible alternative scenario.

We argue that the grassroots perspective taken by the indigenous movement indicates the search for an alternative economic re-arrangement that responds to the nature of the indigenous struggle. We base the feasibility of an alternative scenario on two promising events which point in that direction. First we look at the San Andrés Accords, signed on February 16, 1996 by the Zapatistas and the federal government. These peace accords consist of four documents: a statement of agreement and acceptance regarding the joint agreements, Document 1, Document 2 and Document 3.2. Although the signing of this agreement could have been interpreted as a peace agreement for a cessation of hostilities between a guerrilla group and the government, it was in fact an agreement of a deeper nature. The Accords stated a clear commitment on behalf of the government to eliminate the causes of the rebellion, with the federal government committing to take significant steps in the fields of culture, rights and democracy. Though the government indicated complete agreement to the Accords and originally fully endorsed them, it later unilaterally modified the Accords, and continuing to the present (2006) still does not honor them. It is not surprising that the debate regarding

the Accords remains at the center of the indigenous discourse and also at the center of Mexico's political agenda.

Due to the limited focus here and the extended range of implications of the San Andrés Accords, we have selected two elements as key in sustaining an alternative economic scenario. The first is the possibility of a *new legal framework* between the indigenous peoples and the government. The second key element is the promising economic practice of the *Economía Solidaria*, which has emerged in the midst of the conflict. Instead of basing an alternative economic scenario solely on economic arguments, we choose these two elements which have already begun to take root in Chiapas.

The First Stepping Stone: A New Legal Framework

Though the government expected a rather quick and easy flow in the negotiations of the San Andrés Accords, the government representatives found themselves facing a situation without precedent. The rebels were determined not to accept any political or economic benefit from the government, rejecting any possibility of co-opting the movement. The rebels insisted on a single and simple principle set forward by the Zapatistas: *the defense of their dignity* (Lopez y Rivas 2004). In the box which follows (Box 12) we turn to the text itself, highlighting important elements of the proposed new relationship between indigenous people and the Mexican government. This new relationship, (as it appears in these documents), rests upon a new legal framework which is yet to be constructed.

Box 12 **Key Elements of the San Andrés Accords for a New Legal Framework**

The Foundations

a) ***Recognition of indigenous demands in the national Political Constitution in which such rights should be embodied as legitimate rights.*** The government commits itself to the recognition and support of indigenous peoples in their efforts to become key players in decisions affecting their lives, and reaffirms their condition as Mexicans with full exercise of the rights they have rightfully earned for their role in the building of Mexico. This includes political, jurisdictional, social, economic and cultural rights. The Mexican government recognizes indigenous people as new subjects of law, including their right for self-determination and eliminating the **restricted capabilities** of indigenous peoples.

b) ***Broadening political participation and representation***. The state should promote legal and legislative changes to broaden local and national political participation and representation of indigenous peoples. It includes the recognition of the political, economic, social and cultural rights of indigenous people.

c) ***Guaranteeing full access to justice.*** The Mexican state should ensure total access of Indian peoples to the judicial system of the Mexican state. This process must be done with a spirit of respect for the cultural characteristics of Indian nations and peoples as well as with the recognition of differences and internal procedures within the communities.

d) ***Promoting the cultural manifestation of indigenous people.*** The state should promote and coordinate cultural policies aimed at broadening the spaces of indigenous peoples for the production, recreation and dissemination of their cultures.

e) ***Ensuring education and training.*** The state should provide access of indigenous peoples to education, science and technology.

f) ***Guaranteeing satisfaction of basic needs.*** The state should guarantee conditions for indigenous people to allow them to take care of their nutrition, health care and housing needs.

g) ***Promoting production and employment.*** The state should promote the economic base of indigenous people with specific development strategies agreed upon with them, based on their capabilities and leadership.

h) ***Protecting indigenous migrants.*** The state should promote specific social policies to protect indigenous migrants both within the national territory and beyond its borders.

The principles that should govern the actions of the Mexican state are the following:

1. **Pluralism**. The dealings between the peoples and cultures that make up Mexican society should be based on respect for their differences, under the assumption of their fundamental equality. The state should promote a pluralistic approach in society to combat discrimination. The actions of the state should be carried out without making a distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.
2. **Sustainability**. It is essential and urgent to ensure the continuance of nature and culture in the terms used by indigenous people, as fined in article 13.2 of convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The state in conjunction with indigenous people should promote the sustainability of indigenous towns and communities through settlement mechanisms aimed at rehabilitating damaged indigenous territories in the spirit of convention 169 of the ILO.
3. **Comprehensiveness**. The state should promote comprehensive and concurrent actions by the institutions and levels of government
4. **Participation**. The state should encourage institutional actions promoting the participation of indigenous peoples and communities and respecting their forms of internal organization, in order to attain the goal of strengthening their capacity to be decisive players in their own development. This should include the transformation of institutions and be shaped by indigenous peoples in conjunction with the Mexican government.
5. **Free determination**. The state shall respect the exercise of free determination of indigenous peoples in each of the spheres and levels in which they will enforce and practice their separated autonomy without detriment to national sovereignty and within the new regulatory framework for indigenous people.

Besides the foundations and principles displayed in Box 12, the San Andrés Accords specifically point out that this new legal framework includes constitutional amendments; i.e., Articles 4 and 115 and the consequent amendments at the state level. It also includes recognition of indigenous communities in the national legislation as public law entities, their right for association between municipalities to achieve coordination of common actions, and the commitment of the Mexican state to transfer natural resources to indigenous communities so that they themselves administer the public funds allocated to them.

The Second Stepping Stone: The Economics of Solidarity

If the conditions for sustainability seem complex and difficult to build in the midst of globalization, is there a possible alternative? For approximately thirty years, seventeen municipalities in the state of Chiapas have chosen regional alternative economic practices that could respond to the specific circumstances and needs of indigenous people over those of main stream economics (see Map 4). Economía Solidaria (the Economics of Solidarity) offers a doable alternative for the practice of economics.

In 1969 DESMI A.C. (Civil Association for Economic and Social Development of Mexican Indigenous People) was formally organized. This was one year after the Medellín Conference and the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of students and workers in Mexico City. DESMI had actually been in operation in Chiapas since 1968 as an agency which provided assistance to communities. Its philosophy, which led to its consolidation stage, was described in one of its meetings in the following words: “To make life bearable so that there will not be so much suffering” (DESMI A.C. 2001). During this phase resources and decisions were external factors to the communities. In 1974 the association moved to the construction of models around the organization of production, labor and the means of production. The association became more

organizational, carrying out projects to provide health, education and other services.

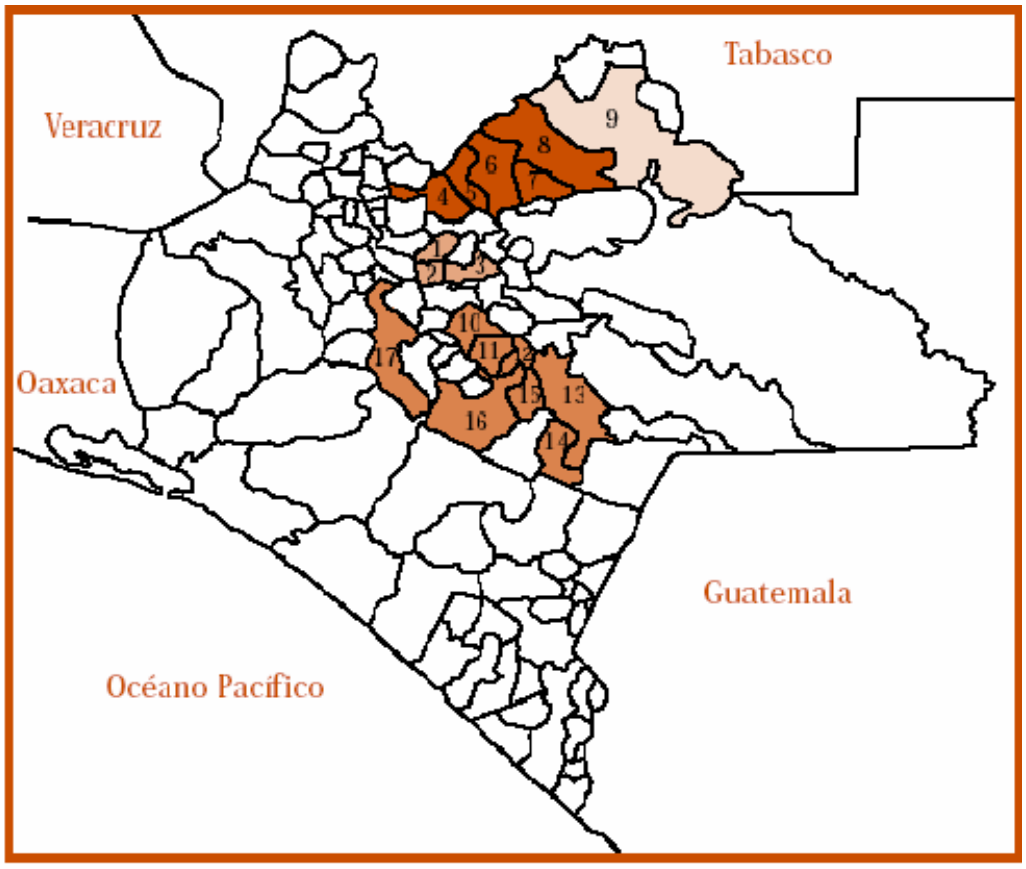
In 1978 the predominant economic practices that surrounded the life of indigenous and peasant communities were challenged and the search for alternative routes started. DESMI, in conjunction with the communities, become convinced that it was possible to build an alternative economy based on common support, and human relations with groups in other regions within the country and beyond the Mexican borders. It then became clear that in order to obtain living conditions of dignity, only one path could be taken: the empowerment of people as social subjects of their own history and development.

From 1990 to 1999, various groups emerged which carried out development projects, and many communities became involved in social, economic and political change based on human relations and reciprocity, seeking holistic and sustainable alternatives. The result of all of this process was the building of an *economy of solidarity.*

The desire for constructing an economy of solidarity was inspired by the pedagogical ideas of Paulo Freire, who emphasized mutual learning through dialogue, and building upon already-existing knowledge (individual or collective) of the people which in turn connects them to their own history, context and culture. From this perspective, individuals and collectivities then transform what is familiar to them and in the process can transform themselves. The application of Freire's principles became obvious in the practices of the economy of solidarity. The learning process has been and continues to be, built on the already existing knowledge of the economics of the people--the knowledge of carpenters, bread makers, coffee planters, handcrafters, and others.

As the communities became key players in the economic process, DESMI took a facilitator role in the work in these regions (see Map 4).

MAP 4 DESMI A.C. ZONE WORK



ZONA ALTOS

ZONA NORTE

ZONA SUR

Algunos proyectos y colaboraciones de trabajo

(*some projects and joint collaboration with other communities*)

Source: DESMI A.C. available from http:/www.laneta.org/desmiac/MAPAZON2.PDF.

Comparing the economics of solidarity with mainstream economics we can observe contrasting differences (see Table 10).

Table 10 Economics of Solidarity and Neo-Liberal Economics

Indicators	Neo-Liberal Economics	Solidarity Economics
1. The Role of Work	Productivity	a) to meet needs b) self-realization of the person
2. Organization of Labor	Of hierarchical nature--the owners are the bosses	a) democratic b) contributes to the collectivity c) decisions made in community public meetings d) according to culture
3. Technology	Labor substitution	As a tool for work
4. Land	a)merchandise b)individual property c)an enterprise	a) to sustain life b) collective or individual property for the collective use
5. Production	For the market	a) self-consumption b) exchange c) market
6. Price of Products	Determined by supply and demand	According to the amount of work and prices of other products
7. The market	Controlled by large companies and international banks	Controlled by producers and consumers according to real needs
8. Money	Power and merchandise	Means of exchange
9. Relations	Domination	Cooperation and construction of power
10. Space	Competition	Free

Source: DESMI A.C., *Si une come, que coman todos*, (San Cristóbal, Chiapas DESMI, 2001): 97-98.

The bases that sustain the practice of the economy of solidarity are:

a) the collective work of men and women,
b) the availability of revolving loans provided only to previously evaluated collective projects,
c) the philosophy that learning is a long-term goal,
d) exchange between collectivities,

e) recognition of existing wisdom among indigenous people,
f) the priority of development of capabilities and potential ability for creativity, affirmation,
g) relationships among communities, mutual support based on human relationships, equal distribution of resources and economic benefits,
h) a common struggle for justice expressed in a search for autonomy,
i) the priority of protection of rights of communities and each individual, and
j) faith in compromise, in hope and in love for one another.

Nevertheless, as in any other social initiative, the economics of solidarity has encountered difficulties and new challenges, among which are: to learn how to address issues of community corruption, to build trust and confidence regarding abilities and knowledge among various communities and to live out decision-making as community.

Lacking endorsement and funding from public authorities, Economía Solidaria has functioned since its beginning as a model open to the international system. In its early stages DESMI functioned as a connector between the community and the main donor, who at that time was Catholic Relief Services. The task of DESMI was to receive the donations, cash the checks and transfer money to the beneficiaries. Currently DESMI has changed its role and the donors have become diversified; e.g., OXFAM (England), Entraide et Fraternité and Broedelijk Delen (Belgium) and Desarrollo y Paz (Canada), as well as NGO's in Mexico and outside of Mexico. The financial tool used to initiate projects has been a fund which is loaned, then paid back, and then re-loaned to another party. Nevertheless, the protection of the dignity of people has at times met with difficulties when dealing with donors. Often donors hold expectations tied to their donations, such as quantitative results according to their own cultural standards and industrial criteria. Yet the communities expect donors to show

respect and appreciation for other non-quantitative results achieved in their work, such as the developing of organizational networks, and the building of relations and trust. Eventually a relation of trust has developed between donors and the communities struggling to build sustainable livelihoods.

The Economía Solidaria initiative, which is found at the heart of conflict in Chiapas, does not stand alone in Mexico. Other indigenous initiatives have also emerged based on community organization and guided by the principle of sustainability. These initiatives, reported by Toledo, have experienced fair success in claims of rights and entitlements and also in dealing with the international economic process. Table 11 lists the name of the organizations or programs, the number of communities and people involved, and if available, their location and activities.

Table 11 Sustainable Indigenous Initiatives in Mexico

Organization/ Indigenous Peoples	**Number of Commun-ities involved**	**State**	**Work and Achievements**	**Support**
Ejidos Productores Forestales de la Zona Maya.	50 communities 8,000 families	Quintana Roo	20 years of struggle for autonomy Protection of forests Production of natural products Ownership of a company	
Consejo Regional de Xpujil	75 communities	Campeche	Sustainable uses of the forest Production of natural products Promoting economies of subsistence Ecotourism Apiculture	Supported by the World Bank, Mexican Govern-ment and Canada
Indígenas de la Sierra Madre de Motozintla (ISMAM)	ISMAN 156 communities 1,800 producers	Chiapas	ISMAN Exports organic coffee to Europe, the U.S and Japan, diversifies its production and protects the forest, sources of water, produces honey and promotes ecotourism	
Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo (UCIRI)	UCIRI 49 communities 2,500 Mixes, Zapotecs, Mixtecs	Oaxaca (Isthmus)	UCIRI exports organic coffee to Europe (Germany, Switzerland), and has achieved innovated ecological strategies for the production of coffee and other crops Runs health, nutrition, education and research projects within their communities	
Cooperativa Sanzekan Tineme	100 communities	Guerrero	Sustainable production of palm trees which produce leaves used for handcrafts and products for subsistence Creation of reserve areas Reforestation Fair trade	
Yum Balan	40 communities	Yucatán	Created feasible alternative tourist projects instead of destructive mega-projects in the area Ecotourism	
Chontales		Tabasco	Protection of water deposits (the most important deposits in the country)	
ODRENASIJ	13 communities	Oaxaca (Sierra Juárez)	Protection of forests To return control of forests from private companies to the communities in the sierra Creation of natural reserves/ecotourism	
Chinantecos	90,000 people	Oaxaca (Chinantla)	Control over cultural issues Control over own resources Protection of the tropical forest Production of vanilla, coffee, palm trees, trees used for medicinal purposes, herbs and other natural products	
Tosepan Titataniske (United We	58,000 families	Puebla (sierra)	Organic coffee grown under shade of pepper trees and avocado trees Recycling of coffee plants to be used for household	

Will Overcome)			production of mushrooms Compost Production	
Consejo de Pueblos Nahua		Guerrero (Alto Balsas region)	Stopped the construction of a major hydroelectric dam in a tropical forest Promotion of sustainable development projects	
Zoque communities		Oaxaca (Chimalapa region)	Protection of the Chimalapa region with one of the most important permanently green jungles in the country (more than half a million hectares) Brought together ecological organizations, Mexican and foreign scientists in their efforts for sustainability Indigenous communities have launched an initiative to create the first peasant ecological reserve in the country	
San Juan Parangicutiro	More than 1,200 people	Michoacán (Meseta Purhépecha)	Has created one of the most impressive projects at an international level related to community management of a forest and its resources Production and processing of products derived from the forest National and international trade Production of avocados, fruit, corn, products derived from livestock Protects water sources and forests Ecotourism, environmental education	
Tepoztlán community		Morelos (Tepoztlán)	In 1995 achieved the protection of ecological reserves, water sources and communal land from a mega-tourist project planning to build golf areas and hotels	
Nahua communities		Jalisco (Sierra Manantlán)	Protection of 345,000 hectares in cooperation with the University of Guadalajara Human Rights committees Solidarity actions with the rebels in Chiapas	
Yaqui fishing community		Sonora	Creation of a low-scale model of a successful cooperative Achieved successful negotiations with the government, gaining control over water deposits in the region	
O'odham peoples		Sonora (dessert/ border region)	Succeeded in exercising their right to have control over their habitat, which was later declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations and later named "Protected Reserve" by the government in 1993	
Nahua peoples		Huasteca region	Trained people from 57 communities on how to start local projects in agro-ecology	
Seri peoples		Sonora	The last nomadic Indian people of Mexico are involved in a process of cultural revitalization, rescuing their knowledge regarding nature Ecotourism Control over resources	

Data based on Victor Toledo, *La Paz en Chiapas,* (Mexico: UNAM-Quinto Sol, 2000)

A common factor among these grassroots organizations is the achievement of certain levels of control, power and autonomy. These initiatives, as well as the economics of solidarity, confirm what we have stated earlier; that is, the existence of a broader type of economics that is present in Mexico, the *inner-economy,* which has sprung from community living and consequently has contrasting tendencies and goals in comparison to the surrounding mainstream economics.

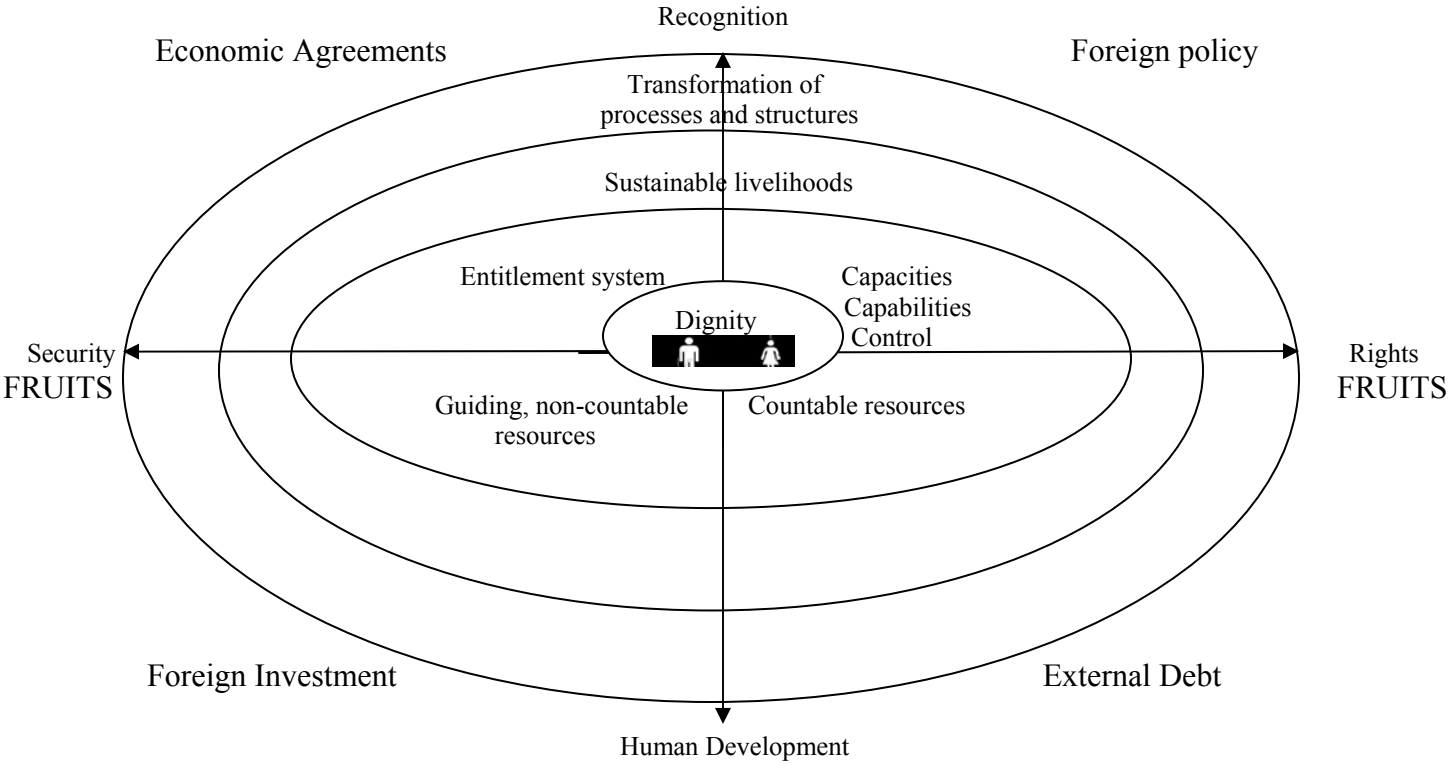
D. The Political Economics of Dignity: The Search for an Alternative Scenario

We have attempted in this chapter the identification of different expressions of the socio-economic and political struggle or (what we can call a common search) within the region for an alternative scenario. The key elements that can be drawn from our analysis up to this point are human dignity, recognition, human security, human development, rights, capacities, and control. We have argued in this chapter that the alternative scenario suggested by the people in the struggle for a different social and political reality in the region must include recognition, the protection of rights, human security, and human development. In addition, the dynamics of such an alternative scenario need to be consistent with the expressed voice of the people in the region. Our suggested picture of what an alternative scenario could look like is illustrated by Model 20, referred to as the Living Economy Scenario (LES).

Model 20 **Dynamics of the Living Economy Scenario**

FRUITS

Contributes to the non-tangible fulfillment of needs in terms of identity, freedom, understanding, participation, protection, subsistence and identity



FRUITS

Contributes to tangible needs: access to justice, access to a functional property/land tenure system, protection of rights, access to health care, food security, reduction of emigration, solving of grievances, significant reduction in marginalization which has resulted from failure of acquirement or failure of entitlements. The aforementioned are counter effects to the sources of increasing inequalities and exclusion.

The Economic Process

Model 20 can be viewed as an image of the top of a tree in a forest. This is an organic unit of a living-economy that is cultivated by the people and honored by the state. The state, actively involved in the process, fosters and protects the embryonic initiatives, assuring financial availability by focusing on institutional capabilities in the region (credits, and non-conventional banking systems), in order to protect the existing entitlement system in rural communities.

At the center the dignity of people functions as an expanding force as people mobilize, working together with organizations and other actors. This expansion, as we have suggested in southern Mexico, moves toward a) recognition, b) the assurance of rights, c) demanding security, and d) seeking an adequate social and economic (human) development. Initiatives become intertwined, moving toward inner-growth. The protection of dignity becomes the means to transform the structure while dignity itself remains the guiding goal. In a similar way, the protection of entitlements becomes the tool for transformation of structure and processes and the goal of development. Following the same direction, human development, (improvements in health, education, etc.), becomes an immediate benefit as well as a tool to attain even higher levels of human development. Finally, as people become caretakers of human life and dignity, their organization and mobilization could become a system of checks and balances of governmental initiatives.

The LES is a people-centered scenario, taking into account capacities, capabilities (household and institutional), cultural control, and traditional and non-traditional resources, all of which are enhanced as the process expands. *Countable resources* are those which can be measured, such as financial gains, land, physical capital, ecological resources, and human capital. Alongside these resources we have found *guiding and non-countable community resources*: cooperation, manovuelta,

guelaguetza, mediería, reciprocity, tequio, relational power with nature, indigenous and peasant intergenerational wisdom, asamblea, the cargo system, and in addition, solidarity, organizational and creative skills. These resources and also the *regulating principles* are usually abundant and available for potential growth. Nevertheless, these elements tend to be dismissed as possible resources for achieving development. Though invisible to the eye of many planners, they remain as enduring resources; since contrary to the nature of countable and limited resources these resources carry the potential for a multiplying effect in the survival of generations of people. These resources can help us to understand the survival of indigenous people. The respected Chilean economist Max-Neef has called resources of these types, non-conventional resources, and has identified two distinct characteristics. First, these resources can only be lost or wasted when they are *not* used. Second, contrary to conventional economic resources which are scarce, these non-conventional resources are plentiful and carry a great capacity to bring about transformation and to produce deep social changes.[150] As this process continues, sustainable livelihoods develop, becoming evident (second circle), and the transformation of processes and structures (third circle) also becomes a reality. Finally, the fruits and benefits contribute to society, sustaining other livelihoods in a non-conflictive manner. This type of economy, based on human relations and cooperation, reduces the likelihood of conflict by promoting non-violent solutions and by encouraging ways of living that are not harmful to people or the environment.

Why the LES Represents a Feasible and Better Alternative

Currently Mexican federal social spending remains low (9% of the GDP as compared to Colombia-16%, Costa Rica-17%,

[150] See Max-Neef, Manfred A. *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections* (New York and London: The Apex Press, 1991)

Brazil-21%, and Uruguay 23%.[151] Increases in social expenditures can be carried out under the guidance of the Human Development Index, as proposed by the United Nations Human Development Report of Mexico in 2002. According to this report, already discussed in Chapter IV, a tremendous difference and outcome could be projected in Mexico if federal spending were to target areas detected by the Human Development Index as those of greatest need. Furthermore, substantial environmental changes could be achieved if economic policies and current social programs were designed according to international agreements already signed by Mexico. Examples of these are the convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the United Nations (1981), the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1981), the Treaty on Racial Discrimination (1966, 1975), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1980, 1981); the Convention for the Elimination against Torture (1985, 1986), the Agreement for the Protection of the Rights of Children (1990) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration to eradicate poverty, and promote human dignity and equality (2000).

In another area, Observation 6 from Chapter IV pointed out the excessive economic centralization in the south of Mexico, and the lack of integration between the rural areas and the urban centers. This situation could be alleviated by a reconfiguration of power, growing out of the strength of civil organizations and commitment on the part of the federal government. Not pursuing this alternative path will likely mean the continuance of unfruitful practices, mainly carried out by the federal government. The unfruitfulness of the current path, and its disconnection from the nature of rebellions, is in itself the immediate if not the most important reason to move toward the adoption of an alternative approach. An additional reason is that current federal assistance programs remain ineffective in reducing poverty in a meaningful fashion or in reversing the process of marginalization or inequality.

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[151] CEPAL, Panorama Social de América Latina 2000-2001, (Santiago de Chile, 2001).

According to a recent joint report by the World Bank and the Mexican government, the federal and state assistance programs in the southern states in Mexico have been disconnected from investments in human capital or other key strategic sectors and have contributed to a reduction of only 2% in the poverty rate in the region. This has left a large income difference between non-indigenous and indigenous populations which still remains at 60% in Chiapas and Guerrero, and 50% in Oaxaca.[152]

Unfortunately, as in the past, trade continues to take priority over the improvement of human living conditions. For instance, resources have been directed toward an ambitious market integration of Mexico with Central America through the Panama-Puebla Plan, which seeks to integrate the nine southern states of Mexico with the seven countries of Central America. The Panama-Puebla agreement has been resisted by numerous indigenous, peasant and civil organizations, and yet in spite of a lack of civil support, the agreement has been favored by the Fox administration. This commercial agreement has been supported with financial resources directed toward its implementation to a much greater degree than the support given to programs for the improvement of human living conditions.[153]

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[152] See Banco Mundial, *Estrategia de desarrollo de los estados del sur de México* (México, D. F.; 2003) Several of the most important programs are listed in following. Progresa- Programa para Educación, Salud y Alimentacion (Program for Education, Health and Nutrition), also know as the CONTIGO (With You) Program, was founded in 1997. The CONTIGO program consists of cash transfers and vouchers to support families with schooled children and provides assistance with health and nutrition issues. In 1998 FISM- Fondo para la Infraestructura Social y Municipal (Social Infrastructure and Municipal Fund) was created as a decentralized program to target poor areas which had been detected by an index of well-being. Finally, PROCAMPO was implemented in 1994 after the inauguration of NAFTA. To note the impact of assistance programs, levels of poverty and contrasting differences see Tania Carrasco and Shelton H. Davis, *Indigenous Peoples in the State of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca* (Mexico City: The World Bank, 2003)

[153] Social Watch is an international network of citizen organizations fighting to eradicate poverty and combat its causes. In its 2005 Report, several Mexican organizations stated that the fundamental discrepancies between the current federal strategy and the human development assessment, resides in the lack of understanding of poverty as a multidimensional phenomena, which entails denial of rights and deprivation. Consequently, programs such as "Oportunidades" (Opportunities), aimed to improve human capital, "Empleo Temporal" (Temporary Employment") aimed to create employment, "Tu Casa" (Your Home), aimed to improve housing, and "Arranque Parejo en la Vida" (Equal Start in Life"), a program to support women with high- increases of resources. A general tendency has been a reduction of resources for these programs in favor risk pregnancies, have not reached the south nor made a difference in terms of the creation of trade zones. See "Social Watch Report 2005: Roars and Whispers , Gender and Poverty:

The persistent strategy for the creation of jobs has proven to have little or no impact on rural populations. Rural poverty has been insulated from these kinds of strategies. A possible reason for this can be the great percentage of indigenous peoples in southern Mexico (80%) who depend on the land for their livelihoods. As stated in previous chapters, indigenous peoples first seek strategies rather than jobs to deal with economic hardships; that is, they tend to *do* work to sustain their livelihoods instead of finding a job. Federal resources and programs that are job-oriented could be changed to promote livelihoods, taking advantage of the existing wealth of the know-how of rural populations in the construction of their own livelihoods.

The economics of solidarity and the indigenous initiatives in other regions of Mexico indicate that instead of looking toward Europe, the United States or Asia as models to follow, a feasible *internal* economic alternative is worth examination and consideration. Although it can be argued that the living economy scenario cannot be proven to be a fully consistently working model in practice, we still insist on the relevance of the *guiding principles* for the development of a healthier economy than what currently exists. The principles presented by Economía Solidaria and other initiatives carry implications that are complex, yet nevertheless promising.

Guiding Principles and Implications of the Living Economy Scenario

There are three guiding principles in the LES. One of the most important is the principle of A) *self-reliance*, which emphasizes that not all things produced should be for the market (exchange value) but rather that the daily food satisfaction of the community (use value) should first be sought. Self-reliance can in

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Promises vs. Action" available from http://www.socialwatch.org/en/informeImpreso/tablaDeContenidos2005.htm

fact provide the foundation for solid negotiation and interaction with the market in an effective way. On a greater scale it may imply that *the struggle for self-sufficiency or food security must take priority over free trade.* This explains why in the illustrated scenario in Model 20, economic agreements are found outside of the expanding circle. According to Sherry M. Stephenson, Chief of the Trade Division of the American States, free trade functions primarily as a political tool. Given that the U.S is interested in free trade in order to place more economies on the continent under its influence, trade functions more as a tool to achieve constitutional changes in countries than merely for commerce. Trade has become a political agenda in foreign policy.[154] It is not surprising therefore, that in the midst of more than forty trade agreements in the hemisphere, which have a variety of implications for the committed countries, civil society in Mexico has called for discussions on: *sustainable national projects, the social wellbeing of people, the reduction of inequalities at all levels, the exclusion of basic foodstuffs from international agreements, the protection of people that work the land and the rights of the indigenous communities that depend on their lands for their livelihoods.*

The second LES principle is, B) *the priority of economic security and the health of the living economy in terms of the satisfaction of fundamental human needs*. This principle implies the need for reassessment of the priorities of economic goals before increasing the size of the economy and assuming that benefits will automatically be derived from growth in terms of wellbeing of the people. This reassessment entails two considerations. First, *the wellbeing of the majorities and communities must be placed above economic expansion.* In other words, *human development should take priority over economic growth*. It has been assumed traditionally that economic expansion leads, without question, to an improvement in the quality of life. Ranis and Stewart in an international study covering 35 to 76

[154] "New Trade Strategies in the Americas" at the Free Trade in the Americas Conference at Baylor University, in Waco, Texas, October 6-7, 2005.

developing countries have proven that contrary to this assumption, in fact in Latin America it is human development that firmly leads the economy to a virtuous cycle of growth and higher levels of human development.[155] Reasons for this are multiple. First, the economic flow that comes from expanding the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and hopefully reaching human development depends mainly on the distribution of income and quality of the economic structure in order to translate the benefits of growth to an improvement in living conditions. The connections that should facilitate a flowing down of the benefits are in fact not automatic and very unstable. On the other hand, direct improvement in the area of health, for instance, can have a multidimensional effect as people are able to work and pursue their interests. If improvement in health is accompanied by improvement in education, the impact in productivity can be even more significant as both factors produce a *reciprocal reinforcement* and have a multiplying effect. Good health enables people to carry out productive activities, including attending school, and in turn, education improves the likelihood of building effective institutions to sustain the level of health already attained, and so on. Other benefits derived from an improvement in education relate directly to central life and death issues. As Sen (2000) has pointed out, pregnant mothers with access to education are able to provide better care for themselves and their babies, altering in this way, infant mortality rates. Eventually, education affects the quality of jobs or livelihoods. Improvement in the quality of life of workers impacts production, and consequently exports, in a positive way. This also increases the likelihood of a more effective distribution of income through better salaries and improved benefits. In spite of these optimistic observations, income distribution and quality of investment in a given economy remain the most unpredictable and challenging issues whether growth is sought to bring about human development or vice-versa.

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[155] Ranis, Gustav and Stewart Frances, "Economic Growth and Human Development in Latin America", *Cepal Review* 75 (December 2002).

Our second consideration regards foreign policy and foreign trade, which lay outside the expanding circle (see Model 20). *It is indeed possible to articulate human security and economic security as a priority and goal in the designing of foreign policy.* As economic agreements become politicized, it is vital for Mexico to protect its own interests in terms of the wellbeing of people in its territory. Some countries, such as Canada, have taken this step.[156] Moreover, we argue that foreign investment and imports can be controlled in accordance with human development priorities. The external deficit (debt), though it is not currently producing a crisis as in the past, still remains the most vulnerable economic issue in the economy. The current administration achieved a reduction in the amount of the external debt between 2000 and 2005, yet for every dollar that was reduced, seven dollars have been paid in interest to service the debt. These transfers to international banks reinforce the loss of and exhaustion of resources. In 2005, 96% of the debt was paid with oil revenues, increasing the costs of petroleum extraction and ecological deterioration in the south.[157]

After 20 years of financial reforms, the financial structure of Mexico represents the Achilles tendon of the Mexican economy.[158] This vulnerability resides in the fact that, though traditionally foreign investment has financed the external deficit of Mexico; the limited credit on behalf of the many foreign-owned commercial banks has frustrated the expected desirable stability and health of the economy.

The current outer-oriented economy is geared toward the accumulation of international reserves which exist only in numbers and are unavailable for use even in the case of a national emergency. In contrast, since the orientation of the living economy alternative is toward the consolidation of home markets, it focuses

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[156] The Document "Freedom from Fear: The Foreign Policy of Canada Toward Human Security" states five priorities in Canada's foreign policy--the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, support of peace operations, conflict prevention, governing and accountability and public security. Available from www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca.

[157] *La Jornada*, 20 July, 2005.

[158] *La Jornada*, 15 November, 2005.

on the protection of the economy of the most vulnerable population to economic crisis, promoting the practice of solidarity and non-monetary resources. In consequence it also creates monetary alternative financing sources for investment and improving conditions to negotiate external debts and deficits.

The third guiding principle is *C), building upon existing resources*. This principle, unlike those that pursue development by implanting new economic arrangements in the Mexican economy, gives preference to the flourishing of local initiatives. As in the case of physical implants where a body may reject an implanted organ detected as foreign, social implants involve high risks and the possibility of mismatching. In agreement with indigenous discourse, our suggested scenario also implies that existing resources deserve recognition and represent a good economic foundation for new initiatives. This principle is not unsupported, as this has long been suggested by organizations at the hemispheric level.[159]

Benefits and Fruits of the Living Economy Scenario

As we have argued before, the living economy struggles for survival through different initiatives from below and is expressed in hybrid forms of economic arrangements. In order to determine what type of fruits and benefits should be planned and sought in a living economy, we need to assess existing needs and find adequate means to satisfy those needs. Max-Neef has insisted on a clear understanding of the difference between needs and satisfiers,

[159] In September 1993, four months before the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, representatives of NGO's with extensive experience working with civil organizations in ten Latin American countries met in Oaxaca for a four-day workshop on social and economic issues. The group debated publicly the conditions of agriculture. The dialog called for agricultural *policies based on already existing resources.* Economic policies, according to the group, must emphasis the contributions of small-scale agricultural producers. Among the organizations represented were: DESCO-Peru, CECADE-Costa Rica, IBASE-Brazil, PUEBLO-Mexico, The Development Institute-Dominican Republic; FASE-Brazil, POSCAE-Honduras, CRIES-Nicaragua, CEDEA-Argentina, RMALC-Mexico, RECHIP-Chile; FUNDE-El Salvador, CEDLA-Bolivia, Mexican Action Network on Free Trade "We Have an Alternative: Plan for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development", Social Action Centre-Jamaica, PET-Chile and The Development GAP-United States. Available from http://www. Developmentgap.or/Oaxaca.html.

affirming the existence of rather limited fundamental human needs: the need for subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation and freedom. Although it has traditionally been understood that needs vary according to location and culture, in actuality, needs belong to a dynamic but finite system. What varies among cultures are the ways that these needs are satisfied. Satisfiers which respond to a sole need are *singular satisfiers;* i.e., food and shelter are satisfiers for the need of subsistence. *Synergic satisfiers* may fulfill a variety of needs simultaneously; breastfeeding for instance can satisfy the need for protection, subsistence, affection and identity. *Violator satisfiers* are those which claim to fulfill the need for protection, but in fact impede the fulfillment of that need and/or other needs. For example, the arms race claims to fulfill the need for protection but impedes the fulfillment of the need for subsistence, affection, participation and freedom. *Pseudo-satisfiers* are those which give the false sensation of satisfying a need, for although these satisfiers do not impair the fulfillment of the targeted need, neither do they accomplish their purpose. An example of this is an obsessive productivity with a bias to efficiency, which aims to fulfill the need for subsistence but falls short of the fulfillment of the targeted need. Finally, *inhibiting satisfiers* are those that over-satisfy one need and as a result inhibit other fundamental needs. Paternalism, for instance, though it responds to the need for protection, inhibits understanding, participation, freedom and identity.

We argue here that the satisfiers have to be identified by those who experience their lack and who can consequently play a key role in the *design of satisfiers*. In the case of southern Mexico, satisfiers have to be constructed by those who*, longing for the satisfaction of those needs have considered the use of force and violence*. Otherwise, well-intentioned satisfiers designed by a third party can easily become inhibitors to other needs. For example, this problem is evident in monolingual education programs which emphasize written and mechanistic thinking provided in the official language by governmental institutions, yet inhibit the

needs of children and families for social acceptance of indigenous languages as valid or the need for the exercise of oral history traditions among indigenous communities. In Chiapas in fact, this has been one of the grievances of the rebels and the indigenous movement. Furthermore, the attempted exercise of autonomy may actually result in a monitored or conditioned autonomy, experienced through a paternalistic relationship between the communities and the federal government, and consequently, also failing to respond to the initial need.

In essence, assistance programs directed at impoverished regions in Mexico resemble pseudo satisfiers in that they inhibit the satisfaction of the need for subsistence and other needs, such as creativity, understanding, participation and creativity. In addition, the militarization of the region functions as a violator satisfier in pretending to respond to the need for protection and human security while in actuality inhibiting the need for freedom from fear, and protection from violence.

The living economy scenario, therefore, suggests the possibility of producing not only adequate but synergic satisfiers that can operate as means while also remaining long-term goals as the process expands. For instance, attaining access to justice also responds to the needs for protection, understanding, participation, and subsistence. An adequate property land tenure system will also meet the needs for subsistence, identity and participation. Not accepting injustices can assure the needs for protection and freedom. The protection of rights additionally meets needs for protection and identity, and access to health encompasses needs for protection, participation, and subsistence. Food security allows for meeting the needs of protection, participation, and subsistence, and the reduction of emigration will further respond to the need for freedom, participation, and identity.

By way of illustration, we highlight two real cases for consideration regarding the feasibility of an alternative, people-centered process. First is the experience of the unarmed Zapotec movement in Juchitán, Oaxaca. The emergence of a coalition of

students, workers, intellectuals and residents of Juchitán (COCEI) in 1964 has been well documented by Campbell (1994). The COCEI movement consolidated a 150 year struggle for autonomy at a regional and municipal level by the Zapotec people in the isthmus of Oaxaca. The COCEI movement successfully resisted a process of cultural, economic and political disarticulation created by the capitalist process which had been promoted by federal and state governments. The COCEI also brought about new organizational forms capable of mobilizing 10,000 people at a time. Combined with a cultural movement which included the emergence of writers, painters and sculptors, the COCEI reached levels of regional autonomy, elevating Zapotec to the official municipal language, and raising Zapotec identity. For the rural population the movement meant the protection of their agrarian livelihoods, land tenure changes and alterations in the class structure. In subsequent elections the government of Juchitán has alternated between the COCEI and other political parties, and often, due to municipal dependence on funding from the federal government, the COCEI has experienced repression. To a certain extent the popular government has achieved a reorientation of their local economy, moving away from large scale, mechanized agrarian production models, and instead supporting existing economic human resources, (such as skilled workers, craftsmen and businesswomen), in Juchitán and the region. Contradictions and setbacks, nevertheless, have been present within the movement. In 1994 Campbell stated the following:

> In the political arena, the Juchiteco goal of local sovereignty and freedom from arbitrary Oaxaca and Mexico City authorities has not been achieved, despite COCEI electoral victories, because the Mexican government can cut off funding to COCEI administrations or send in the troops at any moment. Likewise, COCEI's "Juchiteco democracy" has not given equal rights to Zapotec women. . .despite ideological pronouncements to the contrary. Additionally,

> Zapotec conflicts with other Isthmus ethnic groups continue to be an obstacle to COCEI expansion (Campbell 1994).

Of the various setbacks and difficulties that progressive Mexican grassroots movements experience, gender equality remains one of the most difficult challenges.

The second (and more recent) case for consideration is that of the Tlalpan *delegación*.[160] Seven of the eight towns which are part of this political division, are identified in the CONAPO report and the INEGI government statistics as having high marginalization indexes. In addition to experiencing extreme poverty, these towns faced land tenure irregularities and internal conflicts between the original inhabitants and the new settlers whose arrival was a result of the housing crisis in Mexico City. The original inhabitants are indigenous people with traditional values, who have elected their governing bodies based on traditional practices and customs. This case is an example of the two societies of Mexico in conflict, the traditional, indigenous society and the urban, modern society.

The Mexico City municipal government (GDF) did not show any interest in these towns and their struggle for survival, other than a concern for the land and forest which represent vital ecological reserves for the city. However, in 1997 the GDF decided to implement an official electoral mechanism based on indigenous traditional practices and customs. Sub-delegates emerged from the elections with the right to represent the communities in the city government. In 2000, the first delegates duly recognized by the Mexico City government and having a right to vote in the city government were elected. The process changed the political culture of control and the unilateral appointments the

[160] Mexico City is divided into *delegaciones.* The delegaciones are independent administrative entities that are coordinated by the city government in terms of budgets and programs. The Tlalpan delegación is located in the south of Mexico City. This political unit includes five geographical areas, the fifth of which consists of eight rural towns which are located at the edge of the city limits of Mexico City. This latter area represents an important ecological resource for sustaining Mexico City. The names of the eight towns are San Pedro Mártir, San Andrés Totoltepec, San Miguel Xicalco, Magdalena Petlacalco, San Miguel Ajusco, San Miguel Topilejo, Parres el Guarda, and Chimalcoyotl.

state apparatus had exercised over leaders to gain control of votes and support.

In 2002 during the “First Encounter of the Peoples”, an assembly for the residents of this region, residents and the governing bodies agreed to end the differences between the original inhabitants and new settlers, launching a sustainable joint economic project with the city government. Between 2001 and 2003, with aid from the Department of Ecology and Sustainable Development, a sustainable program was implemented to protect the environment and to start and support productive projects. Both rural livelihoods and employment were actively supported by the city government. Through the dynamic interaction between the local and autonomous governing bodies and the city government, the regularization of land tenure became a reality. Land titles were issued to the original inhabitants and to those settlers that had arrived within the preceding five-year period and had conducted themselves in a peaceful and well-intentioned manner. In terms of access to services, impressive changes were made in a short period of time. Electric power, water, lighting of streets and roads were implemented. The autonomy of the towns and the good will of the government made it possible to have permanent access to consultation services on juridical, administrative, and political issues. The process however, was not free of tension, contradictions and setbacks.

The following are some of the most valuable lessons to be learned from the COCEI in Oaxaca and the towns in the Tlalpan delegación. The path of development has to be made and built by the people. This path is not a clear, straight line forward. Due to the dominating structure of power and persisting anti-democratic practices, the existing democratic institutions and mechanisms in Mexico are not sufficient to bring about human development. Also, formal democracy expressed in the mere existence of elections will not stop the process of impoverishment, marginalization and exclusion. Above and beyond the electoral process, the transformational democratic process demands the full participation

of citizens from all levels of social structure. López y Rivas has noted that the practice of democracy involves the existence of three vital elements: *democratic ideals and vision for the future*, *democratic institutions and the process of democratization*. Of these three elements, the third seems to be the most challenging. As it advances, the process of democratization brings together opposite points of view in an environment of tension; with setbacks, losses, constant changes and instability. Social collectivities that participate and mobilize in order to transform their environment become the driving force in the democratic process. In Tlalpan more than 20,000 people actively participated and together forged a new political relationship with the government, making gains in the areas of recognition, protection of rights, human security; building capacities and gaining control over cultural elements. Making use of non-countable and countable resources, these towns improved their own living conditions, offering to the society at large the benefit of cleaning up and protecting the forests, which function as lungs for the city. Thanks to the good political will of the government in attempting to work with the political structure already in existence in the communities, and thanks to officials trained in a new way of dealing with social actors, Tlalpan is now an inspiring alternative model of how to protect human dignity while transforming a hostile environment.

We have already asked the reader to conceive of our alternative scenario represented in Model 20 as the image of the top of a tree, and now ask that the analogy of a tree be extended to how the economy as a whole could function. Dutch economist Bob Goudzwaard (1995) has presented two ways of seeing ourselves as a society: a *traffic tunnel* image and a *tree* image. These analogies for two types of societies, two economic systems, are here juxtaposed to bring to the discussion important points to consider.

The traffic tunnel society allows the entrance of only a limited number of vehicles. A minimum, steady speed is required for all vehicles and those not meeting the limitations of size, height, weight and speed are (for reasons of safety) consequently,

excluded. This image makes allusion to societal methods of raising productivity and efficiency in an effort to reach the other side of the tunnel. On the way, however, high levels of prosperity and high levels of production become necessary to fund the protection of the environment, welfare and foreign aid. This tunnel economy, therefore, requires sacrifices of the following types:

a) *Exclusion*. This includes those who are unable to produce or fulfill the levels of productivity required--the unemployed, the uneducated, and the sick.

b) *Expulsion of externalities*. Since high levels of productivity and efficiency are sought, the cost of environmental degradation and resulting social burdens are avoided and transferred onto other agents or sectors of the economy. This is seen as necessary because society considers it a priority to continue advancing in the tunnel.

c) *Extraction of resources.* Businesses and actors in the market extract all possible benefits from the resources of production, (land, labor and capital), as they engage in competition. Meanwhile, the need to compensate for the effects of this extraction rises, but so do the costs of dealing with stresses from the work place, unemployment and environmental degradation.

The traffic tunnel society is a *post-care* society, struggling to bear the costs created by its very nature. As the cycle increases its speed, higher levels of production are necessary to cover the increasing post-care costs. Moreover, the expectation of abundance and wealth remains continually in the future and scarcity becomes common place as the society speeds to higher levels of production.

Goudzwaard proposes an alternative image of society and a corresponding alternative economy; (alternative that is, to the utilitarian, extracting and single-resource oriented system of the output economy). The tree analogy represents a society that grows with *wisdom* and the harmonious *cooperation* of its elements, pursuing growth to certain levels. It represents a *pre-care* society. Instead of the pursuit of endless levels of growth, this society

concentrates its efforts (as does a tree) on the bearing of fruit for the benefit of all. *Restraining* from constant growth, it *gives* instead of only extracting. The tree society is a model of responsibility and promotes the *inclusion* of people. It internalizes the costs of secondary effects while seeking the fulfillment of the basic needs of all its members.

Inner Consistency and the Costs Involved in the Living Economy Scenario

Finally, some clarification is needed regarding the tree economy. A society which chooses to reorient its economy inward faces an unavoidable sacrifice, given that resources which otherwise would be available for consumption will now be directed to the care of people and the environment. In this process then, society trades off potentially higher levels of consumption in order to pursue higher levels of "investment" in human, social and environmental capital. Such a society cannot honestly suggest to its own inhabitants that their consumption levels will grow indefinitely. As a civil society chooses to promote inner growth, to maintain consistency it must accept restraints on endless cycles of spiraling consumption.[161] In consequence, levels of income and consumption will probably be lower than in output-oriented economies, which have been geared to constant increases in their level of output. Inner growth has its price.

A sense of abundance may nonetheless serve as a reward for society's option of restraining levels of consumption. This can occur due to the fact that a sense of abundance emerges as people choose to place a ceiling level on consumption. The persistent levels of poverty in industrialized economies, especially the U.S.,

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[161] In standard economics the given level of output of any economy (usually identified with the letter Y), is equal to the level of consumption (C) plus the level of investment (I) in the economy; that is,

$$Y=C+I$$

Consequently, in order to obtain higher levels of Y at any point, the level of consumption (C) or the level of investment (I), need to be increased. Therefore, if an economy wishes to increase the level of investment in human capital for instance, it will imply the redirection of resources from consumption (C) to investment (I).

may reside in the absence of this sense of "enough" to liberate resources for the provision of the fundamental needs of people.

The internal consistency of the inner economy further requires that civil society prefer organic economic practices molded by the needs of the community rather than delegating economic processes and outcomes to mechanical devices such as the "free market" which promote growth at the exclusion of people in need.

Though many may be quick to point out that an inner-oriented economy is not feasible, this is not true. The crucial variable in an inner-oriented economy is the pre-determination by a society of a ceiling on the level of income and consumption. The essence of a tree economy resides in this—that it adopts and accepts a sense of "enoughness" regarding consumption and growth in order to protect and care for the environment and promote the well-being of all its citizens.[162]

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[162] The crucial issue, for any society that desires to invest in its inner economy lies in choosing and setting the initial levels of investment (I) as well as consumption (C) according to desired goals. However, in the end, the level of output (Y) may decrease for two reasons, the first is the reduction of the level of consumption (C) and second, because of the nature itself of new investments in social, human and environmental capital, which on one hand improves the quality of life of people but on the other, relativizes growth of the national product (Y).

APPENDIX

Box 11 Civil Expansion of the Zapatista Uprising in 1994

Level A

1.EZLN

Level B

1. Comités de Consulta Popular del EZLN (EZLN's Committee for Popular Participation),
2. Comités Locales y Regionales de la Convención Nacional Democrática or CND (Local and Regional Committees of the Democratic National Convention),
3. Diócesis de San Cristóbal de las Casas (Dioceses of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico)
4. DESMI A.C. (civil association)
5. CHILTAC A.C (civil association),
6. Comisión Nacional de Intermediación (National Commission of Mediation)
7. Assamblea Estatal Democrática del Pueblo Chiapaneco or AEDPCH (State Democratic Assembly of the Chiapaneco People)
8. Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, (Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Center)
9. Centro de Derechos Humanos Agustín Pro (Agustín Pro Human Rights Center)
10. Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Francisco de Vitoria (Fray Francisco de Vitoria Human Rights Center)
11. Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (Inter-American Human Rights Commission),
12. Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Xalapa (Xalapa Human Rights Commission)
13. Asesores de EZLN (Advisors of the EZLN)
14. Espacio Civil por la Paz/ ESPAZ (Civil Space for Peace)
15. Coordinadora Nacional por la Paz or CONPAZ (National Coordinator for Peace),\
16. Chihuahua para Todos (Chihuahaua For Everyone)
17. Movimiento Civil Zapatista/ MCZ, (Civil Zapatista Movement)
18. Comits Civiles de Diálogo y Negociación (Civil Committees for Dialog and Negotiation)
19. Comités Organizativos del Encuentro Nacional Anti-Neoliberal (Organizing Committees for the Anti-Neoliberalism National Encounter)
20. Movimiento Cristiano Comprometido con las Luchas Populares (Christian Movement Committed to Popular Struggle
21. Consejo Ecuménico de Iglesias, (Ecumenical Council of Churches)
22. Convención Nacional de Mujeres CNM (National Convention of Women)
23. Convención Nacional Indígena/ CNI (National Indigenous Convention)
24. Conferencia Nacional por la Paz (National Conference for Peace)
25. Foro Nacional Indígena Permanente (Permanent National Indigenous Forum)
26. Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional/ FZLN (Zapatista Front of National Liberation)

Level C

1. Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones Indígenas y Campesinas (State Council of Indigenous and Peasant Organizations)
2. Alianza Cívica (Civic Coalition)
3. Sindicato de Trabajadores Técnicos, Manuales y Administrativos del INAH (Workers Union of the Institute of Anthropology)
4. Taller Libre de Calzado de Tepito (Shoe Makers of Tepito)
5. Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Urbanos de la Ruta 100, SUTAUR 100 (Labor Union of Urban Public Transportation Workers in Mexico City)
6. Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana/ SITUAM (Metropolitan University Workers Union)
7. Federación de Sindicatos Universitarios (Federation of University Labor Unions)
8. Frente Auténtico de los Trabajadores FAT (Authentic Workers Front)
9. UV y D
10. ENOC
11. Movimiento Navista (Navista Movement)

(Box 11, Level C, continued)

12. Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia (Civil Movement for Democracy)
13. OCSS
14. Movimiento Unificado Nacional de Jubilados y Pensionados (Unified Movement of Retirees and Pensioners)
15. El Barzón
16. Organización de Ex Petroleros de Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz (Organization of Ex Petroleum Workers of Coatzacoalcos)
17. Organización de Ex Petroleros de Minatitlán, Veracruz (Organization of Ex Petroleum Workers of Minatitlán)
18. Xi-Nich
19. Codimuj
20. Comité de Unidad Tepozteca (Tepozteca Committee of Unity)
21. Frente Cívico Familiar de Mérida (Civic Front of Merida)
22. Cooperativa Refrescos Pascual (Pascual Soft Drink Industry Cooperative)
23. Sindicato de Limpieza de Tabasco (Public Maintence Workers of Tabasco)
24. Coordinación de Damnificados de la Explosión de Guadalajara (Coordination of the Victims of the Guadalajara Explosion
25. Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Coordination of Education Workers)
26. Asamblea de Barrios del D.F (Assembly of Neighborhoods in Mexico City)
27. Frente Popular Francisco Villa (Francisco Villa Popular Front)
28. MPI
29. Consejo Guerrerense 500 años (500 Year Council of Guerrero)
30. Sindicato del IMSS (Social Security Institute's Workers Union)
31. Sindicato de Académicos del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Labor Union of the Academics of the Institute of Anthropology and History)
32. CLETA
33. Asociación Mexicana de Corresponsales en el Extranjero (Mexican Association of Reporters Abroad)
34. Red de Comunicación Popular (Popular Network of Communication)
35. Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (Mexican Labor Union of Electricians)
36. Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Tratado de Libre Comercio (Mexican Network of Action Against NAFTA)
37. CCI-Universidad National Autónoma de México (CCI-National Autonomous University of Mexico)
38. Fundación Manuel Buendía (Manuel Buendía Foundation)
39. Cruz Roja Nacional (Nacional Red Cross)

Level D

1. Comités Internacionales de la Consulta del EZLN realizada en 1995 (International Committees of the Consultation of the EZLN carried out in 1995)
2. Comités Internacionales de la Convención Internacional Anti-Neoliberalismo (International Committees of the International Convention on Anti-Neoliberalism
3. Comités de "Aguascalientes" de Ultramar (Aguascalientes Overseas Committees)
4. Amnesty International
5. Parlamento Europeo, Equipo Latinoamérica (European Parliament, Latin American Team)
6. Grupos de Apoyo al Zapatismo en Londres, Barcelona, Noruega, Bélgica, Berlín, etc. (Zapatista Support Groups in London, Barcelona, Norway, Belgium, Berlin, etc.)
7. Comisión Internacional de Obispos (International Commission of Bishops)
8. Foro Intercontinental por la Humanidad y en Contra del Neoliberalismo. (Intercontinental Forum for Humanity and against Neo-Liberalism)

Source: Xóchitl Leyva Solano, "De las Cañadas a Europa: niveles, actores y discursos del Nuevo Movimiento Zapatista (NMZ) (1994-1997" in *Desacatos* Mexico CIESAS (Primavera 1999):56-88.

Chapter VI

Synthesis: Persisting Vicious Cycles and the Common Search for a Living Economy Scenario

In the introduction to this work we suggested a central question. Our leading question concerned the conditions under which past rebellions have taken place in Chiapas. It further posed the question of what possible conditions would be necessary to achieve a different outcome other than violent uprisings. Chapters II through V have attempted to analyze the crucial issues present in past rebellions and the specific elements which, if addressed, could make feasible a different outcome. The case of the rebellion of 1994 in Chiapas revealed an acute multiple-deprivation scenario for the people who rebelled, and we identified this as a disengagement process. Our proposed analysis took us in search of a possible specific alternative, presented as the living economy scenario. It has not been our intention to suggest a prescriptive model, but rather to address, in the most integral way possible, the essential elements, set forward by the voices in the region, to be included in a possible arrangement to reduce levels of tension and achieve change in the outcome of the ongoing latent conflict.

Our suggested answer is centered in human dignity in relation to the achievement of recognition, protection of freedoms and entitlements, human security, and human development. Our argument has been based on the evidence of an existing latent conflict of a multidimensional nature which involves society, culture, polity, and the economy.

In Chapter V we arrived at the conclusion that the pre-conditions to the Zapatista rebellion, the different proposals that have emerged, the struggles from the inner-economy, and voices from different movements were all pointing to an alternative scenario. We attempted to articulate these various elements in a single proposal, calling it the living economy scenario. We made an analogy comparing this type of economy to a growing and blossoming tree. Yet in attempting to gain an even larger perspective, the image of a living tree can now be amplified to the metaphor of an orchard with a diversity of trees which need consistent and ongoing cultivation. As in an orchard, where people jointly commit to work together, protecting and caring for the trees

and sharing the fruits of their labor, so too our proposed living economy alternative scenario is one in which various economic expressions converge, and due to a compromise of honoring each economic and social expression, diverse initiatives are undertaken with serious consideration. This is the essential condition for an economy of care to emerge and grow. Such an inclusive economy reduces emphasis on outer growth and prioritizes self-reliance while uplifting human dignity. It is not difficult to link the image of an orchard in-the-making which is in need of protection and joint care, to the real economic activities of many indigenous and peasant groups in Mexico, given their great diversity, their connection to the land, creativity, and the variety of economic arrangements which were introduced in Chapter V.

Also in Chapter V we reached the conclusion that the way to take solid steps toward improving the quality of life of the poor in southern Mexico was the removal of constraints (the obstacles manifesting themselves in processes of disengagement) that people experience daily. Armed movements and the intensive civil mobilization found in southern Mexico show evidence of being two sides of a single struggle for freedom. No discourse on economic development can avoid the need for higher levels of freedom, (as an essential tool in the process of development), prior to higher levels of productivity. We have argued all along that disengagement, failure of acquirement, exclusion, and rebellion appear to be strongly interconnected processes which are rooted in neo-colonial practices while reinforcing each other. This view is in opposition to the analytical studies which insist that the path par excellence to be followed by Mexico is the expansion of the economy, i.e., expansion of GNP/GDP or outer economic growth.[163] We have identified this position in our previous chapter

[163] Although this has been the position of the World Bank, in a more recent report the World Bank has suggested a wider consideration of factors for low growth and inequality. The report states that persisting low levels of economic growth and inequality can in fact be affected by historical reasons, such as exploitation of mineral wealth, the destruction of crops suited for the region's climate, and the chronic exploitation of indigenous labor. See Guillermo E. Perry, Arias S. Omar, *From Vicious to Virtuous Circles* (New York: World Bank, 2006)

as the path followed by the so called pro-poor growth initiatives, which rely on outer growth first in order to improve the living conditions of the poor. In opposition to this view we have also arrived at the conclusion that growth cannot bring about meaningful sustainable benefits unless that growth is due to the initiatives of the poor; that is, unless the growth is growth *by* the poor.

In conclusion, this work has argued for the need to address the roots (manifested in different aspects) of violent collective movements in the region. This work has further stated that the protection of human dignity and the search for human development, with a corresponding alternative economic process, are vital for a reduction in the levels of tension in the region and the avoidance of violent outcomes. Nevertheless, the current scenario may well continue and consequently actual conditions may persist or deteriorate. Consequently, our first task in this section is to summarize the possible implications of the economic policies currently implemented in Mexico. We suggest an interpretation of current scenarios through the illustration of two possible vicious cycles. The first cycle is suggested by the economic and political policies currently applied in the region. The second cycle however is drawn from our previous arguments on the connection between economics and violence. This connection is harder to see, as it runs deep below the surface at the inner level of society, revealing the possible sequence between economic policies, rebellion, and repression. *We argue that both cycles point to possible outcomes if change does not take place*. These cycles need to be taken only as an approximation of the complex dynamics of the economy and may be influenced by additional determinants that are here unmentioned, though worthy of analysis. There is no intention to suggest that the dynamics among variables illustrated by these cycles are rigidly fixed and applicable (neither in intensity nor in sequence) to economic circumstances of the Mexican economy at any specific point in time.

Second, we analyze how the indigenous movement has come about and draw three final premises regarding the possible implementation of the Living Economy Scenario, presented in Chapter V. Finally, we clarify the placement of the alternative scenario in relation to the main themes discussed in this work, (e.g., economic growth, conflict, recognition, the struggle for human rights, exclusion, and the protection of entitlements).

The Pro-Stability-Impoverishing Cycle

The first possible cycle which is expected to continue if no alternative is taken exists at a deep level and is reflected in the current common grievance of guerrilla organizations in southern Mexico; namely the economic program still in vogue in Mexico known as neo-liberalism.[164] We call this cycle *the pro-stabilization-impoverishing cycle*. This cycle begins by seeking economic stabilization. The pursuance of stabilization, as we have shown in Chapter III, defined the types of reforms and policies to be implemented after the crisis of 1982 and 1994, which have continued to the present. We have also pointed out the important role that economic growth has played during periods of industrialization and more recently as the sole means to reduce poverty. In consequence, this cycle addresses this twin objective goal of stabilization and growth, taking into consideration current observations made by various Mexican economists.[165] Retaking concepts introduced in Chapter IV, this cycle attempts to illustrate how the global dynamics of enrichment and impoverishment (with its three forms of exclusion) are assimilated at a local level and

[164] As presented previously, this concept identifies the economic ideology behind the economic policies implemented in Mexico after the crisis of 1982. It favors liberalization, market privileges, free trade, a shrinking government, the creation and maintenance of a financial paradise for investors and rigid monetary policies. Neo-liberalism has been perceived as the common enemy by all known rebel armed groups due to the threats that such an ideology represents for the poor in terms of the protection of rights over the land, participation in markets, an increase in poverty, food security, etc.

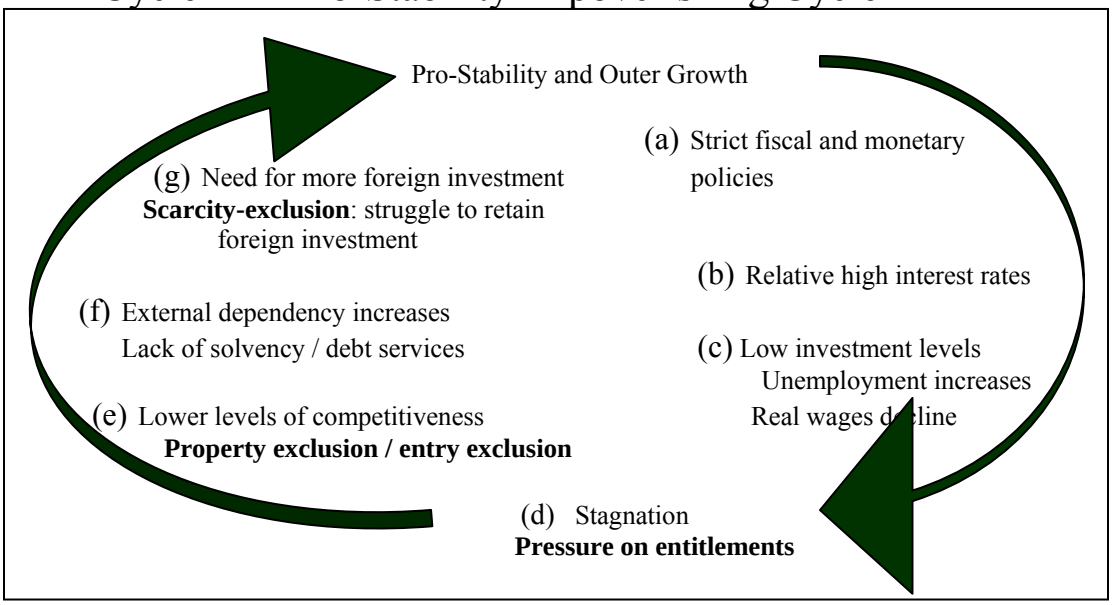
[165] Among the most well-known Mexican economists are Julio Boltvinik, a recognized authority in studies of poverty, Arturo Huerta Gonzales, an expert in economic development studies, and José Luis Calva, an authority on economic structure.

how these mutually reinforcing processes are translated into an internalization of exclusion and impoverishment.

The cycle begins with a double objective on the part of policy makers (see the illustration of Cycle 1 below). On one hand we find economic and financial stability as an unquestioned long-term objective and on the other export-propelled economic growth as the pre-requisite to future stability and economic benefits for the Mexican people.[166]

[166] It is important to note that the reason for the endurance of these objectives runs deep into the economic experience of post-1982 Mexico. After 1981, Mexico abandoned the option of maintaining the state as the leading actor in regulating and protecting internal markets and promoting the welfare of the Mexican majority, which had been the policy that was followed more or less from the mid-1930's until the crisis in 1982. Before 1981, the state fulfilled the expectations expressed in the Mexican Constitution of 1917. After 1982 Mexico acted more as an executor of international financial policies in tune with the so-called "Washington Consensus". The "Washington Consensus" concept was first introduced in 1989 by economist John Williamson. It attempted to summarize the commonly-shared themes among policy advisors of Washington-based institutions at the time, (such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the U.S. Treasury Department), for the economic recovery of Latin American countries from their crises of the 1980s. Among the recommended policies are found fiscal policy discipline, competitive exchange rates, deregulation, trade liberalization, openness to foreign direct investment, and privatization of state enterprises.

Cycle 1 Pro-Stability Impoverishing Cycle


Pro-Stability and Outer Growth
(a) Strict fiscal and monetary policies
(b) Relative high interest rates
(c) Low investment levels
Unemployment increases
Real wages decline
(d) Stagnation
Pressure on entitlements
(e) Lower levels of competitiveness
Property exclusion / entry exclusion
(f) External dependency increases
Lack of solvency / debt services
(g) Need for more foreign investment
Scarcity-exclusion: struggle to retain foreign investment

Once stability and export growth appear as the supreme goals, a second element, (a), finds its natural place within this trend. A rigid monetary policy is set in motion aiming both to sustain the exchange rate (avoiding the building up of uncertainty regarding inflation) and to support the peso from a possible devaluation. In tune with these strict monetary policies high interest rates are also set in order, (b), to maintain or attract foreign capital. Though high interest rates may indeed attract foreign capital and stimulate growth via exports, they can also hurt domestic markets via lower levels of investment, (high interest rates make loans expensive), and possibly lead to lower levels of employment, profits, and wages, (c). The unavailability of credit is reflected in domestic stagnation, (d), due to low levels of domestic investment by Mexican-owned companies. Consequently, the loss of competitiveness in the non-export sector becomes inevitable, (e).[167] Local small and median investors eventually reduce their share of domestic markets. The process of enrichment allows foreign companies as well as powerful Mexican companies to

[167] See Huerta Arturo. "Alternativas de política económica para el crecimiento sostenido" *Economía* Mexico- UNAM 3 no. 7, (January-April) 2006.

benefit in terms of expansion through acquiring more companies thanks to the process of privatization of state companies and through the acquisition of multiple sharing of the markets and profits. As national companies lose levels of competitiveness, trans-nationals find high levels of profits and large numbers of potential consumers through the creation of new scarcities (created needs). The cycle returns to the starting point as the economy lacks solvency to fix external deficits (foreign debt) and more foreign investment is needed, (f) and (g).

At this stage of the cycle depressed domestic markets become evident, as does pressure on and failure of entitlements and an increasing dependency on the performance of other economies, (such as that of the United States). Also at this point, the dynamics of enrichment-impoverishment are visible through three types of exclusions. Mexico is excluded (monetary exclusion) from the creation of international liquidities by financial or governmental institutions. Moreover, the peso cannot gain status as a key currency in the international market. This property exclusion explains the persistent indebtedness, the urgency for foreign investment and the continuing dependency on exports. However, these solutions to the problem of the lack of foreign currency become in turn even greater problems. For instance, foreign investors are not only interested in stable markets, but are attracted to the possibility of obtaining high profits. These investors generally have no intention of placing their investments in the home sector of the economy, as their interests are limited to investments with quick financial returns. These investments can easily leave and move to a third country. Furthermore, the issues of foreign debt and the decreasing number of markets open to Mexican exports have become major problems in themselves, and are now greater than the initial problem of the need for foreign exchange.

As exports are restricted (entry exclusion), an external disequilibrium is felt, the fear of instability appears and the need to be more competitive rises. Consequently, new technology and

qualified labor is incorporated into the process, excluding the non-educated and maintaining wages low for those who are included in the process.[168] The dynamics of enrichment and impoverishment become pervasive as exclusion widens. More benefits go to fewer hands and greater numbers of people are pushed into failure of acquirement. Poverty expands as the most dynamic sectors of the Mexican economy are used not to improve the lives of people but to cover external deficits.[169] Additionally, as exports are restricted from entering wealthy countries or are paid at low prices, the idle time of home industries increases as do the number of part-time jobs, jobs with lower wages and unemployment rates.

Finally the third type of exclusion (scarcity exclusion) is connected to the dynamics of impoverishment in three ways. The first occurs as highly competitive transnational companies enter domestic markets, "crowding out" established firms and other economic actors from existing scarce resources, such as land, energy, and input materials. This causes the prices of these scarce resources to rise as well as the level of market prices in the home markets. Second, newly-introduced products tend to contain new features and are launched through intense advertisement campaigns. Thanks to these new features and other claims, new products tend to dominate the market in terms of sales, as they succeed in creating customer preference over traditional domestic products. New products therefore create their own status as "needed" products, while traditional products, (which can be traditional satisfiers for a specific need), are crowded out. These processes constitute the essence of scarcity exclusion, which consequently reduces the possibilities of growth of home markets and the inner economy by the crowding effect of transnational companies. Finally, due to the dependency of the economy on

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[168] According to the 2006 report of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Mexico appears on a global scale as one of the countries with the most deteriorated level of wages; even below the level of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. The report points out that 30 million Mexicans survive on two-thirds of a minimum wage and another 10 million (in extreme poverty) survived on one-fourth of a minimum wage. *La Jornada*, 8 February, 2006 and OIT available from http://www.oit.org.mx/

[169] According to the President of the National Bank of Mexico, in 2005 96% of reserves channeled to the payment of servicing the external debt came from oil revenues. *La Jornada*, 20 June, 2005.

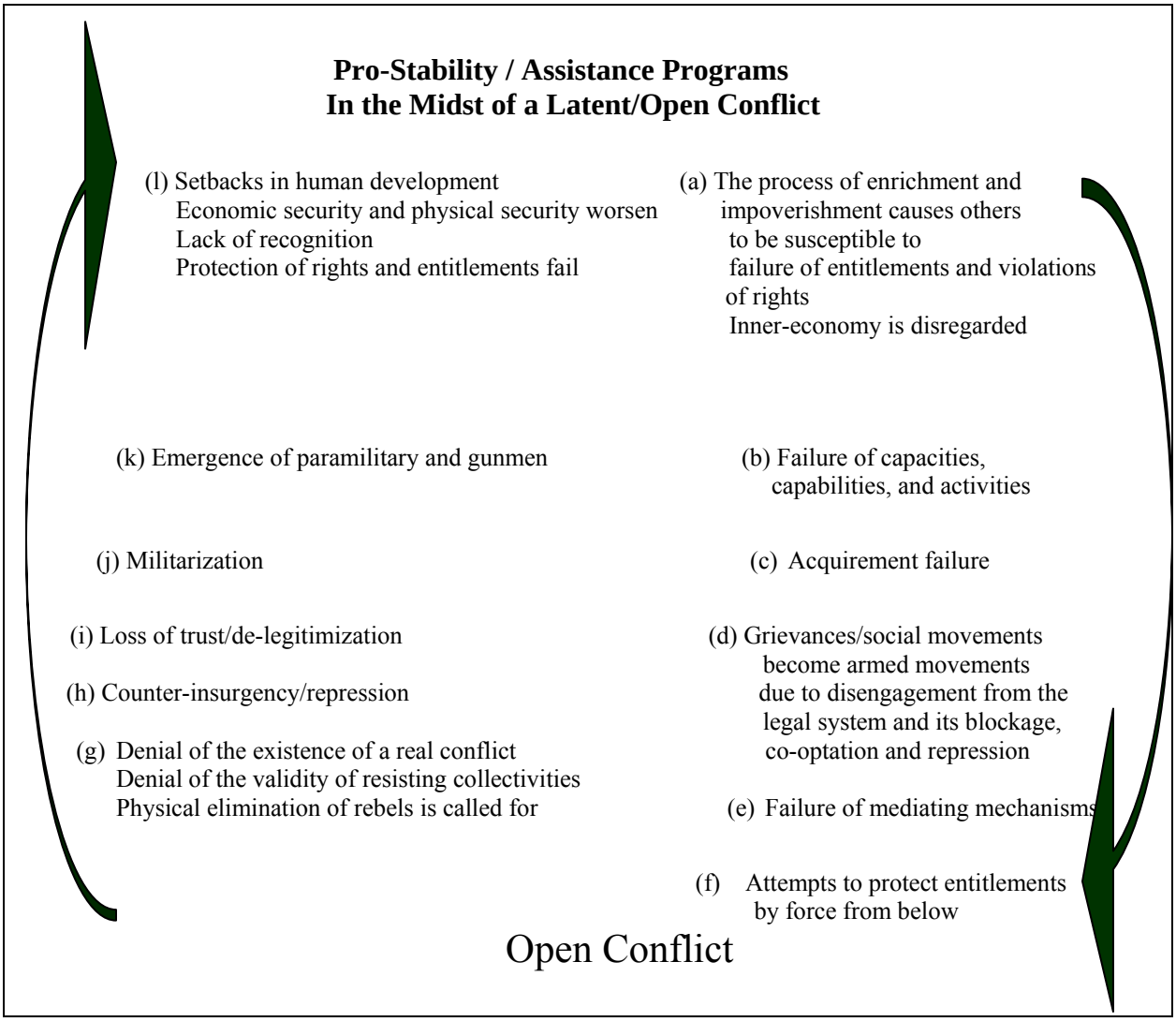
foreign investment for revitalization, the Mexican economy engages in a constant striving to capture a portion of the foreign investment created in wealthy countries.

Eventually, the cycle begins again in the search for stability and growth through the pressure to maintain liberalization, rigid monetary policies, high interest rates, low levels of credit, and high levels of foreign investment. Parallel to this process, local markets are depressed and the resulting lack of solvency haunts policy makers. Consequently, pressure begins to build in the direction of failure of entitlements, which leads to the second possible cycle.

The Pro-Stability, Failure of Entitlements, and Violence Cycle

The pro-stability, failure of entitlements, and violence cycle is characterized by the vogue of economic policies which overlook the pressures created on entitlements in terms of the rights of workers, communities, collectivities and other actors who hold a social contract protected by the state or institutions (see Cycle 2). As entitlements begin to fail, workers receive wages below expected levels, collectivities lose rights that are stipulated in social contracts, groups of people become excluded from social rights such as education, health, and access to water (a). Resources once understood as a right without restriction, (such as the right of access to clean water), become subject to privatization and the control of market forces. These types of rights are violated due to the powerful forces of enrichment and impoverishment. The effects of the process of impoverishment then spread throughout the countryside and the cities, as people who cannot carry out productive activities become subsistence workers, the unemployed or emigrants. Poverty sets in as the process of disengagement, stimulated by the failure of capacities and the process of impoverishment, is generalized among the most vulnerable.

Cycle 2 Pro-Stability, Failure of Entitlements, and Violence Cycle


Pro-Stability / Assistance Programs
In the Midst of a Latent/Open Conflict
(l) Setbacks in human development
Economic security and physical security worsen
Lack of recognition
Protection of rights and entitlements fail
(a) The process of enrichment and impoverishment causes others to be susceptible to failure of entitlements and violations of rights
Inner-economy is disregarded
(k) Emergence of paramilitary and gunmen
(b) Failure of capacities, capabilities, and activities
(j) Militarization
(c) Acquirement failure
(i) Loss of trust/de-legitimization
(h) Counter-insurgency/repression
(g) Denial of the existence of a real conflict
Denial of the validity of resisting collectivities
Physical elimination of rebels is called for
(d) Grievances/social movements become armed movements due to disengagement from the legal system and its blockage, co-optation and repression
(e) Failure of mediating mechanisms
(f) Attempts to protect entitlements by force from below
Open Conflict

Failure of capacities and productive activities (b) leads to acquirement failure (c). These failures eventually affect the social and political actors who find themselves powerless to influence their environment due to their disengagement, official repression, fear or loss of trust (d). Meanwhile, the natural mechanisms for mediation and conflict resolution embedded in indigenous

communities or civil society are dismissed (e). Finally, the tendency to protect entitlements from below persists and will eventually emerge as an open conflict (f).

The second phase of this possible scenario suggests that the different facets of a Mexican culture sensitive to the violation of fundamental rights will continue to emerge, with different types of rebels seeking to stop further humiliation and inspiring one another in the struggle for social justice. Under these the current circumstances it is expected that the government will continue to deny the existence of a real conflict and ignore accords made with indigenous peoples (g). It is also to be expected that repression and the process of militarization and paramilitary activities will follow the lack of recognition of the causes of rebellion and the legitimacy of rebel groups. Along with these processes, legitimacy and trust will be undermined (h, i, j, k). Additionally there is no evidence to lead us to believe that in time the armed movements will abate. On the contrary, the most current report on the incidence of armed groups gives evidence of increasing possibilities for these processes to occur. Reports indicate that a new stage of transformation and multiplication of guerrilla groups occurred between 1996 and 2001.[170] By 2006 armed groups have been identified in three centers of power, representing at least 12 armed groups, (some of them new to the Mexican scenario), in addition to the Zapatista Front.[171] The economic and political force of neoliberalism, a term that entails free market ideology as well as

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[170] See "La guerrilla mexicana: de la unidad a la ruptura", December 2003 available from http://www.ciepac.org/ and "*Los tres ejes de la guerrilla"* available from http://usuarios.lycos.es/cedema/. Information about guerrilla activity is scarce and in many instances what we know is through communiqués from the armed groups themselves, public appearances or official reports. Nevertheless, Jorge Lofredo, a political scientist and columnist for *La Hora* newspaper in the city of Oaxaca, has closely followed guerrilla activity and has authored the most current reports.

[171] Unlike many clandestine armed groups, the Zapatistas have taken public political actions, such as the current political tour of Zapatistas throughout the country called "la otra campaña" (the other campaign), as mentioned previously la otra campaña aimed to unite grassroots struggles for social justice among the people of Mexico. *La otra campaña* does not promote political party affiliation as do the various candidates for the presidency. A complete coverage of *la otra campaña* can be found at http://www.jornada.unam.mx/laotra/

the economic agenda in vogue in Mexico since 1982, has become a central grievance and common enemy for all these armed groups.

By the end of the cycle, previous efforts placed on economic or human development are lost, further aggravating regional economic inequalities. Southern Mexico with the lowest levels of human development will likely continue to be characterized by counter-insurgency activities (seeking stabilization) with frequent mobilization of the military, which has already built up in the region. These will be combined with periodic presidential assistance programs, which, carried out in the midst of latent or open conflict, will fall short of the needs of the people. Conflict escalation will tend to persist as indigenous communities, peasants, intellectuals, and students may choose the same tool used by the government or other dominant groups to achieve social goals--violence. In the end, the true roots of the rebellion, the evidence of an existing latent conflict, and the open conflict will be under-rated. Not pursuing a viable alternative is likely to mean the continuance of these official unfruitful practices.

Culminating Premises

We have pointed out that the two vicious cycles that were introduced are interlinked and connected at different levels. Regarding this interdependence, three important premises can be drawn. First, as we mentioned previously, it is important to state that we are not suggesting that the scenarios illustrated by these cycles are actually occurring with the same intensity and exact causation. For instance, the intensity of the effects of the economic policies of export-oriented growth was probably at its highest in the 1980s when the structural adjustment policies were radically adopted. In the 1990s, however, though the economic policies remained in essence the same, they were shaped by both a second crisis and the desire to achieve the signing of NAFTA with the U.S. and Canada. The difference between the intensity and the impact of these policies during the 1980s versus the 1990s on the

inner-economy will need to be analyzed in future research. In spite of these limitations, a case can be made that there is sufficient evidence that Cycle 1 is in actuality producing negative effects among the vulnerable population and unprotected collectivities. We argue, therefore, that as long as these types of policies are in effect, Cycle 1 will probably persist in the future.

Regarding Cycle 2 it can be argued that elements such as the process of enrichment, which became pronounced during the process of privatization, have continued, with the emergence of more millionaires in Mexico. The increasingly higher levels of inequality and income concentration are evidence of this. Additionally, according to the evidence presented in previous chapters, higher levels of poverty and marginalization in the region have remained consistent in the past and may well persist in the future. In reality, the pressure on and failure of entitlements vary, as do the reactions by civil society to protect them. The existence of hundreds of different unresolved conflicts with a variety of features provides evidence of pressure on rights and entitlements and the lack of human security.

It should be noted that the transformation of civil movements into armed fronts also appears to be occurring. Furthermore, though unusual, the reverse process also takes place. A prime example of this is the Zapatista armed front, which by the end of the 1990s had transformed itself into a strong civil movement with broad support that predominantly followed peaceful means. In conclusion we argue that although the intensity of open conflicts and counter-insurgence activities may vary, Cycle 2 is a fair description of what occurred in Chiapas in 1994; and, though it is occurring with less intensity, what is also happening *currently* in southern Mexico in particular.

Second, as we have pointed out in our previous chapter, stabilization and export-oriented growth cannot of themselves solve the issue of a growing poverty and marginalization nor the

issue of armed rebellions in southern Mexico.[172] As the reader has probably already inferred, *various* counter-cycle strategies may be necessary in order to alter the outcomes of these two possible cycles. Consequently, economic policies should target the solidifying of a strong inner-economy. Trickle down economic policies have, without doubt, the good intention and potential to benefit people. Nevertheless, these policies in themselves may not be suitable to address urgent and important issues which blockade the honoring of dignity and the possibility of building up sustainable livelihoods. Some of the needed economic strategies may include drastic policies, such as a re-negotiation of the external debt for the sake of giving priority to food security and self-reliance. These strategies may even imply temporary suspension of debt services. Such policies may indeed cause the Mexican administration to enter into a crisis with its international creditors, resulting in the loss of foreign investment. However, this could lead to a revitalization of local investments by lowering interest rates, and thus expanding credit for indigenous initiatives and farmers. Nevertheless, these policies may still be insufficient in terms of not meeting the fulfillment of fundamental needs of the majority of Mexicans.

In essence, our second premise deals with a pattern drawn from our previous analysis and the direction that the indigenous struggle has followed. We can deduce from our work that the indigenous movement has in essence followed an upward process of movement (see side A of Model 18). This upward process synthesizes what we have discussed in previous chapters: the struggle for recognition, the protection of rights and entitlements,

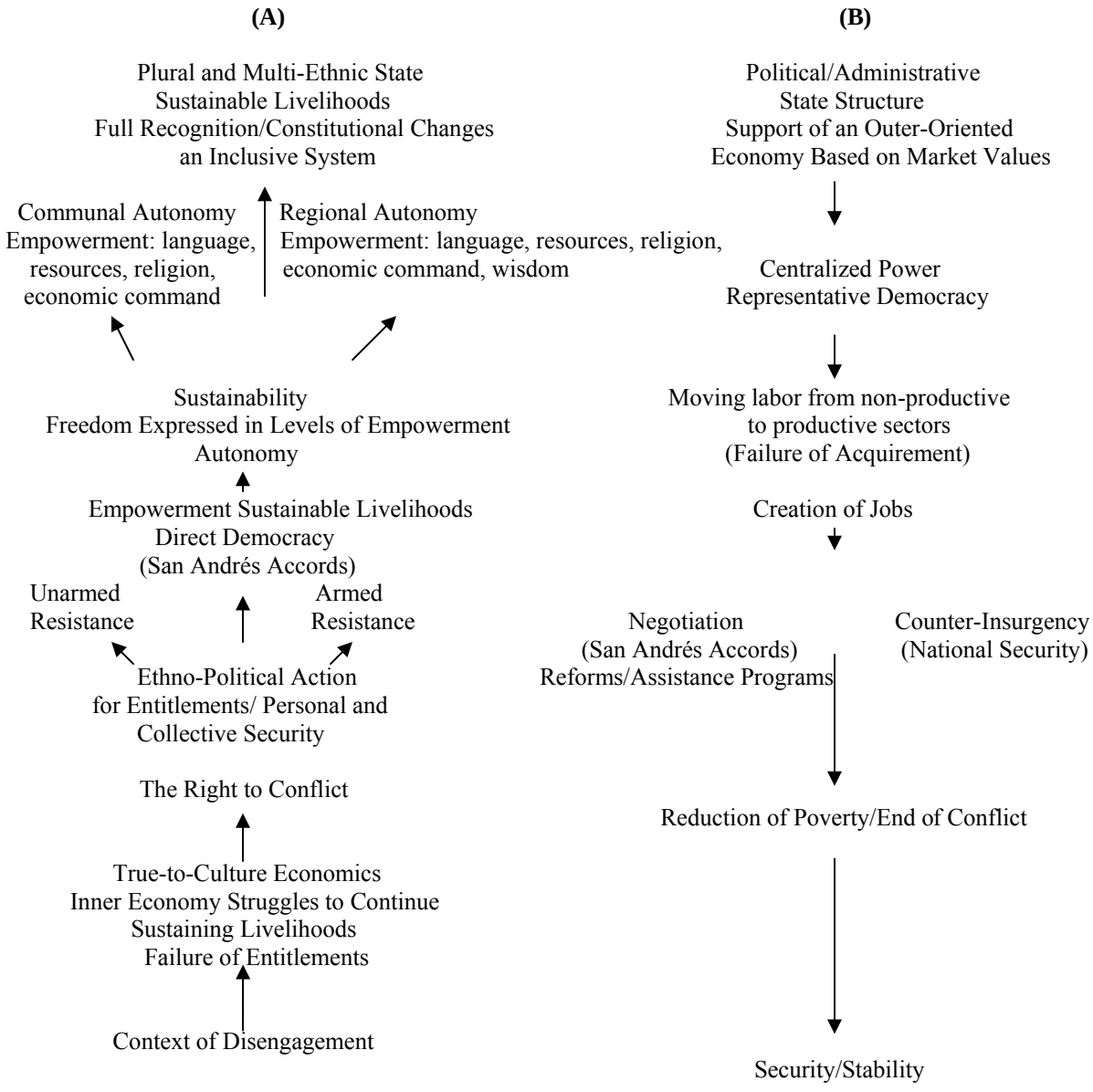
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[172] One of the objectives of the Development Goals of the Millennium Agreement endorsed by Mexico and 190 other countries at the United Nations in 2000 was to reduce by 50% the number of people living in poverty by the year 2015. Yet already in 2004 the World Bank stated that Mexico would not be able to achieve such a reduction. The World Bank calculated that at the rate of growth of the Mexican economy of about 3.5% annually, it was expected that of the existing 26 million poor in Mexico, there would be a reduction of 13% instead of 50%. According to the World Bank, in order to reach the millennium goal of reducing poverty levels by half, Mexico would have to sustain a 5% annual growth rate, though such a high rate of growth has not occurred in Mexico since the 1970's. In addition, another unreachable goal became evident: the reduction of mortality rates by two thirds for children under the age of 5. *La Jornada*, 18 April 2004.

the inner economy, autonomy, and capacities. It delineates these elements within the context of the general struggle of the indigenous movement for a plural and diverse state.

Based on our analysis of governmental action, we can conclude also that government presence in the economic and political arena has followed a downward process (see side B of Model 18). This downward pattern reflects the approach that the government has taken in dealing with the conflict and other issues, such as the persisting poverty in southern Mexico. As we have argued, economic growth is set as a conditional goal and economic policies aimed to increase productivity therefore follow. Although the government had negotiations with the Zapatistas, a possible factor in the government's decision to begin negotiations with the rebels shortly after the uprising was the importance of maintaining a stable and confident market for the signing of the NAFTA agreement. This may explain why the San Andrés Accords, signed by the government and the Zapatistas and discussed in our last chapter, have been disregarded, and although the Accords reached Congress, they were first modified in order to be considered for debate.

Model 18: Two Flows of Change



The upward movement makes evident the nature of the struggle of indigenous people, which is in essence *a struggle for rights,* or in the words of the "rebels" "*a dignity struggle".* This process arises out of a context of multiple disengagement and exclusion, followed by an exercise of "*the right to conflict*" which is concretized in ethno-political action. At this point two paths diverge—resistance can be either armed or unarmed. As we have argued here, the existing embedded insurgency, far from being a social anomaly which should be made to disappear, reveals a frustrated socio-political movement. This movement stems from a deep sense of injustice propagated by, what Pablo Gonzales Casanova has called, *internal colonialism* (Gonzales Casanova 1965). As the upward flow continues, autonomy and empowerment are sought at communal and regional levels.

Our third and final remark in this synthesis is related to the work of De Gaay Fortman (2006), which has shed light on the contrasting directions and implications of both the upstream and downstream flows, similar to those in Model 18. In the following models (19 and 20), De Gaay Fortman illustrates the implementation of human rights in both downstream and upstream flows. The first case (Model 19) shows the process for the implementation of international standards on human rights based on the United Nations' chart. This model shows the goals of the initiative flowing down and becoming an initiative of governments, which then engage in the elaboration of policies and programs that can reach the people.

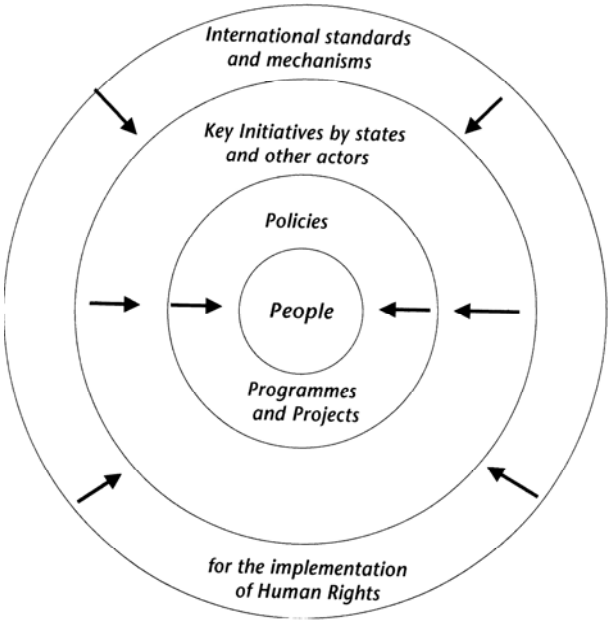
The second case (Model 20) suggests a contrasting perspective, showing the initiative of people seeking the protection of their own dignity to be the starting point. Eventually, people demand that main actors carry out their duties, honoring and implementing policies accordingly. Finally, this process brings about the formation of sound policies, with the content determined by the people. It is evident that the upstream process more closely resembles the dynamics of the indigenous movement in Mexico than does the downstream pattern. The upstream principle also

matches the expanding movement for the protection of dignity within our proposed Living Economy Scenario, introduced in the previous chapter.

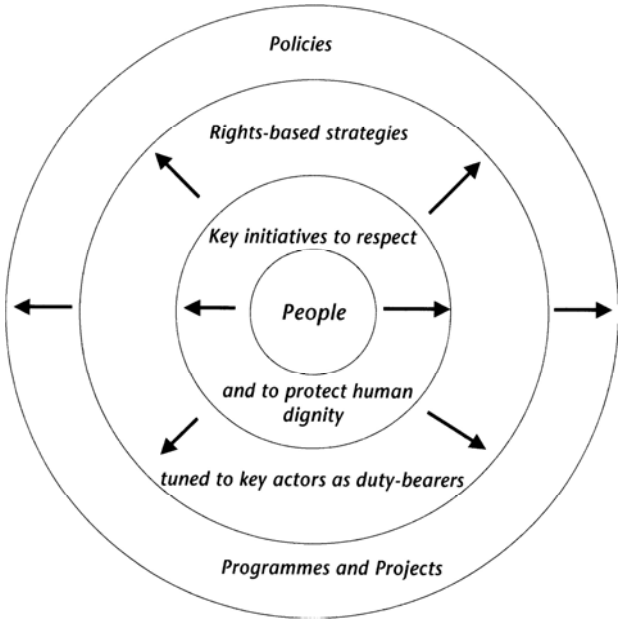
Regarding the upstream flow, we make two important observations from De Gaay Fortman's analysis. In the process of appropriation of universal declarations of rights, confrontation may result as inevitable. Second, the policies and rights that can protect human life are not a static and completed articulation, but are indeed a diligent effort *in process*. According to De Gaay Fortman, the difficult *process* of law and the hard work of a true realization of rights are conditioned by people's participation; otherwise, rights remain merely as formal statements or international declarations. The United Nations' declaration on the right to education for instance, becomes a national reality thanks not to the international declaration, but to the society itself which makes this aspiration a reality for everyone.[173]

[173] See Gonzales, Jorge Iván. "El proceso de construcción de la ley" en *Conservatorios: los derechos integrales, condición para el desarrollo* (Bogotá: CINEP, September 2001)

Model 19 Human Rights in a Downstream Perspective



Model 20 Human Rights in an Upstream Perspective



Source: Bas de Gaay Fortman, "Safe Water" in J.W. dVisser and C. Mbazira eds., *Water Delivery: Public or Private?* (Utrecht: Institute of Constitutional and Administrative Law and Community Law Centre, 2006), 3-12

The fact that while the downstream practices have not borne fruit, the upstream pattern (as a social and political strategy within the Living Economy Scenario) represents a more people-centered pattern in which sustainable livelihoods are promoted, food security for the poor is protected and inequalities are reduced through the growth of the inner-economy. Unfortunately, if the current trend is followed, the search for growth alone will absorb creativity, resources and the sacrifice of clever initiatives of the poor. In the end, this type of disproportionate growth may not be sustainable nor reduce poverty.[174]

Furthermore, the upstream movement in order to realize rights is accompanied by a political and economic decentralization to allow interest collectivities to achieve more control over their lives, to shape strategies to protect livelihoods, and to assure civil participation. To avoid these measures will mean a continuation of policies aimed at managing marginalization in the attempt to better govern people who perceive themselves as living without dignity.

The Placement of the Alternative Living Economy Scenario

We finish our synthesis by presenting in a visible way the manner in which this proposal fits within the overall spectrum of poverty, growth and conflict. Illustration 21 places the Living Economy Scenario within the area of inner growth, (Area B). This illustration features the two opposite directions which are taken by the inner-oriented economy and the outer-oriented economy.

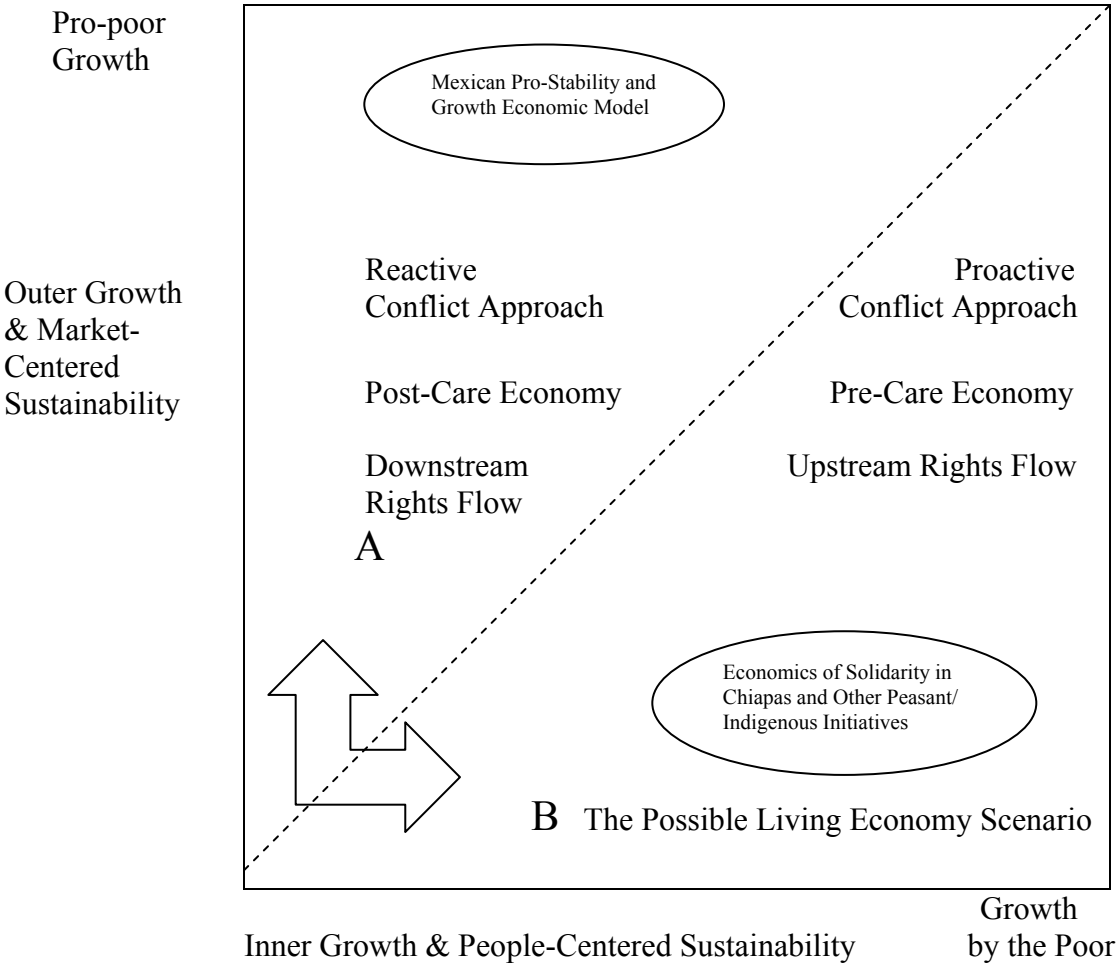
The path of outer growth primarily seeks the maximum output of goods and services via increasing competition and productivity (A). This route of growth moves consistently and

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[174]As the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2006 Report from the United Nations has pointed out, most developing countries on the planet have shown a strong annual rate of growth. The average growth rate is expected to remain above 5% for African countries and around 5.6% for non-African countries. However Latin America lagged behind with an average growth rate of 4%. Nevertheless, the report states that all of this growth is not expected to be sufficient to meet the Millennium Development Goals, due to the fact that the growth experienced may not be sustainable as it was mainly a result of high export commodity prices on the markets. See *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2006* (New York: United Nations, 2006) available from http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.html.

rapidly toward a type of growth that hopefully will deliver the benefits of growth to the poor and disengaged in society, though the issue of distribution and empowerment is postponed. Although sustainability is included in this type of economic process, it is viewed from the perspective of the mainstream market economy. Consequently this type of sustainability tends to be consistent with the interests of powerful players in the market economy. Nevertheless, as this type of economy moves upward, disregarding a Mesoamerican type of economics, it lacks roots and fails to deliver a positive and sustainable impact on the daily struggles of the poor. Furthermore, poverty is not approached as a multi-dimensional phenomenon nor seen as a matter of human rights and entitlements. Instead, the goal is limited to a mere increase in monetary gain of the poor. Additionally, a reactive conflict policy is set into motion and the likelihood of continuing armed rebellions increases.

Model 21 Placement of the Alternative Living Economy Scenario



In contrast, the inner-oriented economy grows from below, building on existing economic arrangements and reflecting the current ongoing development initiatives by the poor and by civil (indigenous and non-indigenous) initiatives. The Living Economy Scenario (Side B), if free to flourish, may grow driven by the existing current joint efforts of the poor to transform their daily livelihoods. Nevertheless, these efforts for now remain ignored, unsupported, sabotaged or repressed.[175] This type of economic

[175] Examples of this are the Economics of Solidarity initiative in Chiapas and other economic initiatives presented in Chapter V. A more recent example is that of the striking teachers and civil organizations in Oaxaca during the summer of 2006 at the height of that ongoing conflict. The teachers and civil

growth also places care for people and the environment above the pursuit of endless higher levels of growth. The Living Economy Scenario can provide a meaningful benefit to the people living in disengagement thanks to the continuing upstream flow which leads to the protection of rights and entitlements. Finally, the approach to conflicts in this path is a pro-active one; that is, latent conflicts are dealt with at their roots by the convergent work of government and civil society initiatives, taking advantage of non-violent conflict-resolution mechanisms currently in use within peasant and indigenous populations. This type of growth can indeed be facilitated and protected by the state due to its potential reduction of levels of poverty, improvements in human development etc. Though it is possible that this option may imply a slower rate of growth of the national product, and even a temporary deficit in the national accounts, yet qualitatively the achieved levels of growth will be a reflection of the level of self-reliance which the economy has reached.

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organizations attempted to promote local markets and reclaim traditional popular cultural festivities (which had become commercialized by the government) as festivities of the people and part of the local economy.

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